

**The Origins of Democracy - Political Developments in Greece ca.
1150 – 462/1 BCE as compared with the structures of Ancient Near
Eastern Polities**

Hovedfagsoppgave i historie

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Preface

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List of abbreviations

AA Archäologischer Anzeiger

AJA American Journal of Archaeology

AnatSt Anatolian Studies

ANET³ Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament; Pritchard, J. B. (ed.) 1969 (3rd edition)

AOAT Alter Orient und Altes Testament

AR Archaeological Reports

AS Assyriological Studies

BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research

CAH² Cambridge Ancient History, second edition

CAH³ Cambridge Ancient History, third edition

CANE Civilizations of the Ancient Near East vol. I-IV, Jack M. Sasson (ed.), New York 1995-

FGrH Dir Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker

KST Kazi Sonuclari Toplantisi

JMA Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology

JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies

OJA Oxford Journal of Archaeology

Op Rom Opuscula Romana

Rd'A Revue d'assyriologie

SAA State Archives of Assyria

WA World Archaeology

WdO Die Welt des Orients

Part I

“Die Griechen hatten keine Griechen vor sich. Sie wußten also nichts von der Möglichkeit einer Demokratie, bevor sie sie selbst verwirklichten.”

- Christian Meier¹

“It was the political institutions that shaped the “democratic man” and the “democratic life”, not vice versa”

- Mogens Herman Hansen²

1 Introducing a study of the origins of democracy

This thesis is dedicated to political developments in Greece from the Dark Age ca. 1150 to the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1. These developments encompass the emergence of the polis; the Greek city-state. Athenian democracy emerged in the late 6th and early 5th century, and is a part of the political developments which formed the polis in the 8th century, in which the collective of citizens equal the polity. In Athenian radical democracy, after the reforms of Kleisthenes in 508/7 and Ephialtes in 462/1, all citizens participated in politics by taking part in the deliberating Assembly and People's Court, by sitting in the Council, or by holding office in one of the many boards and juries. Those who owned enough property to qualify contributed to the polis finances through performance of liturgies and services. Principles of anti-professionalism secured the constitution against domination by a bureaucratic elite. Decisions by lot filled functions that are elsewhere normally filled by a bureaucracy.

How did Athenian democracy evolve? From which sources sprang the concept of a politically empowered citizenry? Which historical processes prevented centralised kingship from becoming the ruling principle in Greece? How could citizen assemblies attain a strong position in a society dominated by an elite of a few rich and influential families? What were the origins of democracy?

These problems have been discussed again and again throughout the history of Classical scholarship. The reason for raising these questions again is a matter of angle. Today, democracy is an international word of praise and a veritable export-article of the Western world. It takes pride of place among the Greek birth-gifts to Western civilization, although modern democracy in many respects fundamentally differs from Athenian democracy. Democracy is regarded not only as an invention of the ancient Greeks, but as an inherent part of what it means to belong to the Western civilized world. The present thesis aims at

¹ Meier, Christian: *Die Entstehung des Politischen bei den Griechen*, Frankfurt a.M. 1980, 51

² Hansen, Mogens Herman: *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*, Oxford 1991, 320

challenging these claims. It will start at the other end of the scale, so to speak, by analysing Athenian democracy as a cultural phenomenon with its roots in the Ancient Near East. Instead of treating democracy as different from all previous political practices, it may be examined as the result of a cultural development. Cultural development does not take place in a vacuum. Both ancient and modern definitions of Mediterranean cultures has left Ancient Greece more or less without neighbours for much of its history: In the writing of Ancient Greek history, the cultures and peoples of the Near East are summarily reduced to barbarians, who either invade and repress the Greeks, or have a negative, effeminising, or corruptive influence on Greek customs and culture. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that this was not the case, and to establish the consequences of Greek interaction with the Near East for the Athenian democratic constitution.

New insights into Athenian democracy can be won by comparing it to neighbouring societies and cultures. By appraising differences and similarities, it will be possible to examine the alleged uniqueness of Greek culture. Perhaps European cultural chauvinism has hidden much of historical reality from the Classical scholar, in the traditional reading of everything Greek as a European achievement?

In Greek myths current in antiquity, Europe was a Phoenician princess from Tyre, who was abducted by Greek seafarers (Hdt.1.1-5): The cultural flow went from East to West for centuries before the Persian Wars, when enmity towards Asia became a literary *topos* and political slogan. Interaction between Greece and the Near East was thriving in the Late Bronze Age, and continued in certain pockets even throughout the Dark Ages. The Iron Age saw an explosion in exotic imports and Near Eastern influences on Greek art. Increased interaction in the Eastern Mediterranean is evident from both archaeology and literary sources. The Greek debt to Phoenician science was acknowledged by the Greeks themselves. They were aware of the influence of the Ancient Near Eastern cultures on Greek culture. The Greeks travelled extensively, entered exchange-relations and established connections all over the Eastern Mediterranean coast and into Anatolia, the Levant and the rest of the Near East. The political environment of the Athenians in the Archaic age was not limited to the Greek poleis, but included the Near East.

This thesis aims at tracing Athenian democracy back to its origins. It is likely that these origins lie in the beginnings of the city-state itself. The city-state, at least, was no Greek invention. A study of its early history takes us back to the city-states of Mesopotamia in the middle of the 3rd millennium. Written evidence provides information about the political organisation of these societies. These are the earliest human societies with documented

political institutions, and the study of their development is necessary to provide insights into the emergence of politics.

The point of departure for the present study is that an interpretation of Athenian democracy as part of political developments in the Ancient Near East has been consistently avoided in most literature on the origins of democracy. The present examination argues that this is to ignore the evidence. The thesis will encompass a huge time span and a vast geographical area, but will concentrate on developments which may be analysed as leading up to and resulting in the Athenian democracy. It is proposed as a program, or a point of departure for a new analysis of Greek democracy; as the result of political developments starting in Mesopotamia in the third millennium. It is an attempt to study Ancient Greece encompassing the history and culture of its neighbours in Anatolia, the Levant and Mesopotamia.

1.1 The thesis

The thesis is organised in three parts, corresponding to three questions, each aiming at answering the initial question: Whence came Athenian democracy? I. Is it methodologically sound and theoretically possible that Greek and Ancient Near Eastern political structures resemble each other? II. Is it historically and geographically probable that an Ancient Near Eastern influence on the development of Greek politics took place? III. Are there structural similarities between Ancient Near Eastern and Greek political institutions that make it not only possible, but probable that Athenian democracy developed from Ancient Near Eastern predecessors? In other words, the thesis is organised along the questions concerning how cultural interaction took place and by which means, with a comparative analysis of the possible instances of parallelism resulting from this interaction. A hypothetical answer to the main question is that Greek democracy emerged as a stage in a continuous development of the political structures of the city-state, which began in the Ancient Near East. The answers to the three subsequent questions will determine whether this hypothesis is justified or not.

Asking for the origins of democracy quickly generates more questions. Why do the masses play an important part in Greek political culture? How did this culture evolve? Was citizen-rule an alternative to other forms of leadership, or a basic political principle? These questions eventually concern the polis-phenomenon as such, and the initial development of the Greek city-state. This development took place during the Dark Age, after the breakdown

of the Mycenaean palace-society ca. 1150.³ The first poleis were probably under establishment by the 8th century, if not earlier. The diversity of their political structures was probably influenced by experiences gained during the Greek colonial period, from the 8th to the 6th century in particular.

Between the 12th and the 8th century, writing was practically unknown in Greece. No text of literary or historical content has been found from this period. This adds an additional aspect to the study of the development of the polis: The sources to the political development of this period are indirect, through the epic poetry of Homer and Hesiod, and later sources such as the historians Herodotos and Thukydidēs. From the Ancient Near East, epic poetry and administrative documents provide some possible corroborative evidence about political developments. The sources to the Athenian reforms of the 6th and 5th century, including those of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes, which mark the constitutional establishment of democracy in Athens, are indirect and from later accounts. Almost no documentary evidence has survived, except what has survived in the works of poets and historians. The reconstructions of events and processes in Dark Age and Archaic Greece, and the Ancient Near East, used as evidence in this thesis, build on models based on modern, anthropological studies of primitive societies, as well as analogies and comparisons with later, better documented historical cases.

1.1.1 The reforms

This thesis aims at explaining the Athenian radical democracy as a historical phenomenon; as the result of a cultural development. By radical democracy is meant the Athenian constitution and political practices after the revolt of the demos and subsequent reforms of Kleisthenes (508/7), and the reforms of Ephialtes (462/1). The scope of this thesis ends with Ephialtes. The Periklean democracy, of the time of Athenian empire and during the Peloponnesian Wars, and the democracy of the time of Demosthenes, both build on the constitution after Ephialtes. Investigating the origins of democracy means, in this thesis, to look at the processes leading up to the reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes, and how these reforms were enacted, rather than what happened afterwards.

Before Kleisthenes, Athens was ruled by the tyrant family of the Peisistratids. The tyrants had gained power by seeking popular support against the other aristocratic families, the Alkmaionids in particular. Conflicts between landowners and peasants of Attica had been

³ Although it might have been an isolated event, the destruction of the granary at Mycenae, perhaps about 1150, is commonly treated as marking the end of Mycenaean civilization (Snodgrass 1971 [2000], 29).

addressed previously by the reforms of Solon (594/3). Solon's abolishing of debts and division of the citizens into new property classes did not affect the root of the conflict, however, namely the poverty of a large part of the peasant population of Attica. It was the disenchanted masses who supported the tyrant Peisistratos. The conflict between rich and poor, and between the tyrants and the aristocratic factions, grew into a civil war. The Spartans became involved, and ousted the tyrants in 511/0. Competition within the elite continued: Kleisthenes sought the support of the Athenian people against his enemy, Isagoras. The Spartans returned at the summons of Isagoras to help him against Kleisthenes, who went into exile. The Spartan invasion, their immediate banishment of several aristocratic families, and an attempt to abolish the Council, provoked the resistance of the Athenian masses. Kleisthenes and the exiled families returned, and their enemies were routed. After the victory of the exiles and the Athenian masses, Kleisthenes reformed the constitution.

The main innovation of Kleisthenes laid in the reformation of the demes, in which the old voting groups were broken up and redistributed in ten new phylai to unite pieces of coastal, mountainous and plain territory all over Attica. Because adjacent areas no longer belonged to the same political unit, the local bases for aristocratic power evaporated. The demos was realigned along a new structure to prevent concentration of power in the hands of local aristocrats. This reform was successful in ending the generations of civil strife and elite rivalry in Athens. Kleisthenes also introduced ostracism as a tool for the people to get rid of individuals aspiring to tyranny.

The reform of Ephialtes in 462/1 was the final blow to elite rule in Athens. The Council of the Areopagos, whose members served for the rest of their lives after holding office as Archons, was dominated by the aristocratic families and exercised authority and power over the decisions of the Assembly. Through the reforms of Ephialtes, its power was divided between the democratic institutions of the Council of Five Hundred, the Assembly and the People's Court.

The Athenian radical democracy after Kleisthenes and Ephialtes was characterised by a division of power between the Council of Five Hundred, which prepared issues for the Assembly, the Assembly, which deliberated on and voted on the proposals of the Council, and the People's Court, which passed judgements in private and official affairs. All adult male citizens might participate in the Assembly, and those over thirty might serve in the Council and as a member of a jury. There were a number of additional offices one could have and boards in which one might serve as member, but there were strict limitations on how frequent one might serve. One was only eligible once for office, twice for the Council. This was to

prevent professionalism. At the beginning of each term, all magistrates had to undergo a *dokimasia*, a scrutiny to assay their worthiness for office. At the end of each term, all those in office had to undergo an *euthūna*, a scrutiny of their performance in service.

Athenian democracy was based on the participation of all adult, male citizens in debate and decision-making, both jurisdictional and political. The necessary bureaucratic functions were performed on the principle of non-professionalism and assignment by lot. Most expenses of the state were covered by mandatory contributions from the rich through the liturgic system, and the state silver mines of Laurion, leased out to contractors employing slave labour. Revenue from the Delian League was also used to cover Athenian public expenses.

It can be argued that a political system, which excludes women, foreigners and the young, and with an economy based on slavery, is no democracy. The Athenians argued that citizenship, and thereby political participation, should be linked to property, and to the contribution to the war effort. Non-citizens, slaves and women were barred from what was perceived as the core of the Greek polis, the citizen hoplite army. The structure of polis society and its implicit model citizen created a large group of politically voiceless outsiders. This is more of an argument against Athenian definitions of the citizen, however, not against the radical democracy as such.

1.1.2 Defining democracy

Most ancient writings on democracy are from its enemies. Both Plato and Aristotle preferred aristocracy or oligarchy, and despised the Athenian form of radical democracy for its lack of differentiation between good and bad citizens, and for being controlled by demagogues and the multitude of the poor. The principles of appointment by lot and that no man might serve several times in office were ridiculed by contemporary political philosophers, and the general impression is that ancient intellectuals were anti-democrats.

To Aristotle, the worst kind of democracy is where the multitude is sovereign, and not the laws (*kyrion d' einai to plēthos kai mē ton nomon*). Such a state of affairs occurs, should proposals prevail over laws (*ta psēphismata kyria ēi alla mē ho nomos*). This happens because of the demagogues (Arist. *Pol.* 1292 a 1-7).⁴ Aristotle was particularly opposed to the practice of paying for the performance of offices and participation in the assembly. Pay (*misthos*) out

⁴ The demagogues make proposals to please and flatter the people. This leads to the tyranny of the masses. All matters are brought before the people, and their decree is sovereign over the laws. This enhances the power of the demagogues, and spells the end of the constitution (Arist. *Pol.* 1292 a 8-30).

of state revenue (*prosodos*) made it possible for any citizen to devote his time to politics, even though he originally had no leisure (*scholē*).

Aristotle defines four forms (*eidea*) of democracy: The first form is where the farming element and the element in possession of a reasonable amount of property are in charge of the constitution (*to geōrgikon kai to kektēmenon metrian ousian kyrion ēi tēs politeias*). The constitution is governed by the laws (*kata nomous*), since the citizens have to work in order to survive and don't have any leisure, so that having set up the laws, they attend the necessary assemblies only. The others have a part in the constitution according to whether they fulfil the property-qualification defined by the laws, on which account all those who fulfil it may participate (*dio pāsi tois ktēsamenois exesti metechein*) (Arist. *Pol.* 1292 b 22-34).

The second form is based on birth. It is open to all whose birth is not contested (*tois anypeuthynoīs kata to genos*) but only those with leisure can actually participate (*metechein mentoi tous dynamenous scholazein*). The laws rule, because there is no revenue (*prosodos*). A third form is where everybody who is free may partake (*to pāsin exeinai hosoi an eleutheroi ōsi*). As above, only those who can afford time off actually participate, so that the laws rule also in this form (Arist. *Pol.* 1292 b 34-40).

The fourth form of democracy is the latest to develop in states (*en tais poleis*). Because the poleis have grown much larger and have much larger revenues, all participate in the constitution, because of the superiority of the multitude (*dia tēn hyperochēn tou plēthous*). Even the poor share in and take part in the government (*koinōnousi de kai politeuontai*), since they can allow themselves leisure (*dia to dynasthai scholazein*) because they receive payment (*lambanontas misthon*). In this way, the multitude of the poor is master of the constitution, and not the laws (Arist. *Pol.* 1293 a 1-10).

Aristotle's definitions really don't say much about how democracy worked. However, the point in question is not the constitutional history of democracy (there are good sources to the institutions of the Athenian constitution), but a history of democratic thinking and practice. Aristotle's definitions are useful for their emphasis on qualifications: In radical democracy, everyone was qualified, regardless of birth, wealth or status. The people decided; not the laws. The people were the law. Only the history of these attitudes and of this approach to political matters amount to an explanation of the origins of democracy. To be able to compare the Athenian democracy to any other polity or constitution, however, it is necessary to define some points of comparison.

A more helpful definition of democracy in this respect is found in Herodotos, in the "Persian" constitutional debate: The rule by the multitude has the most beautiful name;

isonomia, i.e. equality of political rights. Offices are determined by lot, the magistrates are liable to give account for the administration of their offices, and all deliberation is carried out in the midst of the community (*palōi men archas archei, hypeuthynon de archēn echei, bouleumata de panta es to koinon anapherei*) (Hdt.3.80.6). These criteria may be a suitable point of departure for a comparison between Athenian democracy and other polities: Measures against professionalism in positions of influence, official scrutiny of the conduct of officials, and common deliberation on political issues. The citizens control the officials, and may call them to account. Decisions are taken after public deliberation, or at least presented to and debated by the public.

In contrast to modern representative democracies, the Athenian democracy was direct. This means that each citizen voted directly in each given case, rather than delegating this responsibility to somebody else. Most important, however, is the Athenian emphasis on deliberation: Politics were formed in common, through debates and discussions. Voting came second, the prime political activity was to discuss. The principles behind Athenian democracy are those of equality. All citizens are in principle fit to take part in ruling the state, and everyone should be informed and involved in politics. The citizens share something in common; they have part in a common good, which is the polis.

1.1.3 The city-state and the polis

The polis is a political community peculiar for its integration of the peasants into the citizen body of the city-state. At the same time it is an urban community, and has traits in common with other city-state communities known from the Ancient Near East. A comparison with these city-states might shed light on the development of the Greek polis. The Ancient Near East is important to include in this study, since the first state formations in history took place in Mesopotamia, from the 3rd millennium BCE onwards. These pristine states, such as Uruk, appeared out of the stratified farming societies along the Euphrates. They were pristine in the sense that they had no forerunners to imitate; they were necessarily the result of an indigenous evolution. Agriculture in Mesopotamia depends on artificial irrigation, which demanded organized common efforts to dig channels and irrigation-works. These states had a redistributive economy based on a temple or palace, and the collective produce was distributed among the citizens by an administration led by a priest-king. Standard pots were used for rations, and writing was invented to keep record of the transactions. The government of these early city-states was not a divine dictatorship, but a co-operation between a ruler, a

council of elders and a popular assembly deciding on affairs of state together. This power structure is reconstructed on the basis of the Uruk lists of professions, the Sumerian epic of *Bilgameš and Akka*, and the later Akkadian epics. It has been studied by Assyriologists such as Thorkild Jacobsen (1943 [1970]; 1957 [1970]), Dina Katz (1987) and Gebhard Selz (1998).

Most chronologically subsequent state formations are secondary to these Mesopotamian developments, and thus the possible influence from the pristine states must be kept in mind. Throughout its entire early history, Greece was in contact with the other cultures of Anatolia, the Levant and Mesopotamia, and influences from these cultures are evident in Greek religion, literature and art. The studies of Walter Burkert (1992 [1995]), Martin L. West (1997 [1999]), and Sarah P. Morris (1992), among others, have thoroughly and convincingly demonstrated these influences, but little has been done to examine the possibilities of Near Eastern influences on Greek politics. The structural similarities between city-states of early Mesopotamia and Greece are so obvious that they are worth a further study, by drawing on Near Eastern sources to explain the origins of Greek democracy.

The development of a stratified society, the basis for a state formation, is well under way in the Homeric world of 8th century Greece. It is possible to analyse the Homeric *basileis*, commonly translated as “kings”, through anthropological concepts as leaders who gain their position through the sponsoring of common undertakings such as building projects and war raids. Thus, politics emerge from an economic development where inequality is balanced by the magnanimity of the wealthy. Simultaneously with the evolution of leadership, egalitarian institutions such as popular assemblies continue to play an important part. The relationship between leaders and the general population is institutionalised in councils and assemblies for deliberation, announcements and ratification of decisions. Bjørn Qviller (1981) has undertaken an analysis of Homeric society as an anthropological case study. Anthropological methods relevant to such studies of history are covered in the works of Marcel Mauss (1950 [1995]), Marshall Sahlins (1972), Morton Fried (1967), Elman Service (1975), Robert McC. Adams (1966 [1973]) and Jonathan Friedman (1978 [1984]).

In the Iliad, the political importance of assemblies is evident, and there was a division of power between a council of elders or chieftains gathered around the king (*boulē*), and a general assembly where all citizens took part (*agora*). Such assemblies are also attested from Ancient Near Eastern texts: In Sumerian, the assemblies of gods, and men, are called *ukkin*. Its function is not altogether clear, but from the short epic *Bilgameš and Akka* and the lists of professions found in Uruk we learn that the king had to answer to a council of elders as well as an assembly of young men. The young men (*guruš*) performed public works and military

services, and they are comparable to the Homeric army (*laoi*), which was composed of non-professional commoners who took care of ordinary work as well as fighting.

The Akkadian term for such assemblies is *puhrum*. It seems like the importance of assemblies remained undiminished in the countryside, in areas far from direct royal control, and in sub-systems within larger political organisations, even in the monolithic imperial structures which was the ideal for Mesopotamian rulers. In general, the city-state continued to be the most stable level of organisation throughout Mesopotamian history. The exceptional successful consolidations of extensive empires (Akkad, Ur III, Assyria etc.) do not seem to have affected local political structures in the individual city-states, beyond the presence of a governor and his administration.

Among the Israelites, assemblies played an important role in politics. This might seem surprising given the centralistic ideals of the Old Testament, but the assembly, *baša'ar*, acted as a court of justice and decided on public matters throughout the Iron Age. It is usually attested as a council of elders who met in the city gate, but there are also indications of a tri-partite division of power such as in Greece and Sumer.

Thus, it is possible to trace the political importance of popular assemblies throughout history, not only as an occidental tradition beginning with the Greeks, but as a general phenomenon accompanying political developments of stratification and the emergence of government. These assemblies play a decisive role opposite the kings, and sometimes have the power to install or remove rulers. A tri-partite division of power in king, council and assembly, as well as the principle of official decisions being made or at least made known in public assemblies, is attestable even in the earliest sources to political development.

1.1.4 A democratic culture

The question remains why such assemblies become so important in Greece, whereas monarchy seems to be the only form of government in Ancient Near Eastern societies. The Greek democratic polis does indeed seem to represent a special case. Ian Morris (2000) explains the development of democratic constitutions in Greece through a shift in ideology away from elite values to an ideal of the egalitarian citizen body. Michael Sommer (2000) claims that a similar development took place in the Levant, where citizens of the Phoenician cities developed concepts of freedom and equality through their independent political position as traders.

Instances of democracy must be studied as social phenomena in historical societies, in order to trace the origins of democracy as a way of political thinking and acting. The elements of public deliberation, scrutiny of officials and general eligibility to offices, and the constitutional partition of power between a ruler, a council, and an assembly, are heuristic criteria for a comparative analysis. Even the first known political societies, the Sumerian city-states, show similarities with Athenian democracy. Athenian democracy was a direct democracy, and deliberation was more important than voting. Democracy was a practice before it became an ideology, and its roots are in the assemblies of the elders, the army and the citizens.

The inherent possibilities and limitations of ancient political institutions must be taken into consideration. The importance of rhetoric in the assembly, and the strong emphasis on charismatic performance in all political practice excluded the uneducated, the poorly skilled and the ugly from taking effective part in politics.⁵ They were reduced to passive voters in the jury courts and other assemblies, unless they held an office assigned to them by lot. In practice, Greek democracy might be termed an extended oligarchy. Its practical limitations must be studied along with the development of its ideas

1.1.5 Conclusion

Further study of Greek democracy should include the study of political developments in the East Aegean and the Near East. Influences from these cultures on Dark Age and Archaic Greek culture in the region are evident. They include influences in religion, literature and the arts, so why not also in politics? Athenian democracy must be understood as embedded in Athenian society, as a cultural phenomenon open to foreign influences.

The analysis of the origins of democracy must be performed taking the entire development of politics into consideration, from Sumer onwards. The study of politics as a cultural phenomenon requires the use of other tools than the mere definition and description of political institutions. Anthropological analyses of the emergence of power, politics and civilization is not only of use for the study of primitive societies, but may shed new light on the origins of democracy as well. Exactly because we count the Greeks to our political ancestors, there is a danger of modernising the past through anachronistic parallelisms. Ancient Greece is closer to the Ancient Near East than to modern Western democracies, both

⁵ The Athenian Assembly became the primary arena for competitive behaviour, *agones*, between members of the elite.

in space and time. Even though millennia lie between the earliest state formations and the Athenian democracy, there seem to be lines of continuity. Democracy was the result of an historical process, not a sudden autochthonous appearance. The origins of democracy must be studied from a wide angle, not only as an internal development in Greece but also as a possibility inherent in the very basics of political evolution.

1.2 The emergence of Athenian democracy – a historiography

1.2.1 Introduction

Most explanations of Athenian democracy tend to focus on developments from Solon onwards, and have their emphasis on Kleisthenes and Ephialtes. Some include preceding developments, traceable in the Homeric and Hesiodic epics. The following survey is meant to cover representative works within the different schools of explanations. Since the literature is so vast, this presentation is very selective, and does not cover every author quoted or subject discussed in this thesis. It is meant as a historiography of the origins and emergence of Athenian democracy, which is what this thesis aims at explaining.

1.2.2 Religion, the family and the polis: de Coulanges' *Cité antique*

An influential analysis of the ancient city-state was, and still is, the *Cité antique* of D. Fustel de Coulanges (1879 [1996]). The *Cité antique* is a thorough analysis of the ancient city-state. It examines the development of democracy as a social and religious development. His point of departure is religion: A primeval Indo-European cult of the ancestors and the hearth formed Greek conceptions of the family, state and society. Ancient state institutions were based on the cult of the dead (de Coulanges 1879 [1996], 14-23). Above the level of separate households was the *phratría*, which consisted of several families. The *phratría* was a society in itself, built up like the family, with its own gods, cult, priesthood, judiciary institution and administration. Its god was a deified human, a *heros*, which was the eponym for the group (ibid. 115-19). The *phratriai* and *phylai* came together to celebrate common cults, and at these occasions, the city-state was born. Family, *phratría*, *phylē*, city, and society were societal units similar in structure and grown out of each other in succession. The initial formations, however, continued to live within the next level (ibid. 124-5). De Coulanges uses the mythical history of Athens as evidence for this model (ibid. 135-8).

De Coulanges describes the political development in Athens (and Rome) as a sequence of four revolutions. The first revolution was the kings' loss of power to a broader aristocracy.

The death of king Kodrus of Athens at the hands of the Eupatrids marks the beginning of the archonship in Athens. The title of king passed over from the political realm into the language of religion (de Coulanges 1879 [1996], 240-2). The second revolution is marked by the uprising of the peasants against the Eupatrids. This ended a period of oppressive aristocratic domination of the landless peasants (ibid. 259-63). The peasants were included in the constitution as citizens. The third revolution consisted in the peasants demanding political rights to defend their freedom from bondage, which was given them by Solon (ibid. 275).

Kleisthenes abolished the old cultic bodies, in which the ancient power structures were preserved, and replaced them with ten phylai with new eponymous heroes, thereby ending the city's religious constitution (de Coulanges 1879 [1996], 276-9). Law after the time of Solon was understood as sanctioned by the people, and not as given by the gods (ibid. 300).

A fourth revolution was instigated by the poor, who wanted political influence (de Coulanges 1879 [1996], 312-15). The Athenian navy had a great need for rowers, and the *thētes*, the poorest citizens, were thus enrolled in the army. This was the origins of Athenian democracy. The ideal of the common good also spoke against a political system in which the rich had privileges over the poor (ibid. 316).

The explanations of Fustel de Coulanges are met again and again throughout modern scholarship, even though many of his opinions have been discarded. Especially his division of Athenian history into separate periods signified by revolutions, and the increasing secularisation of Greek society have been approved by both historians and philosophers. The main themes in Athenian history are a broadening of the basis for political participation, and increasing political freedom. At the end of this development, all citizens are included in the polis. Parallel to this run increasing responsibilities; the citizens have to contribute in the governing of the polis, and to its defence.

1.2.3 Tyranny, revolt and the power of the people: McGlew, Ober, Samons

More recent analyses of the Athenian city-state tend to focus on concrete events rather than long-term developments. James F. McGlew (1993) analyses Athenian democracy as the result of tyranny: Solon had left no place in the constitution for a sovereign *dēmos*; they continued to be exploited by the elite, and soon a tyranny was established (ibid. 107-112). The *demos* could only free themselves by taking control of justice and deliberation, that is, to become tyrants in the tyrant's stead (ibid. 119-20). McGlew's analysis is in agreement with Aristotle's view of radical democracy as a tyranny of the masses (cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1293 a 1-10),

and explains Athenian democracy as the result of a revolt rather than a long-term development.

A different approach, but with a similar result, is that of Josiah Ober (1989; 1996). Ober terms the events of 508/7 the “Athenian revolution”. The decisive move was the *dēmos*’ uprising against Isagoras and the Spartans, who tried to abolish the *boulē* (Ober 1996, 100). The rioting demos were united and realised their own power. They were allied to Kleisthenes as his *hetairoi*; elite and mass interest met in the demand for *isonomia*. Kleisthenes did not lead the revolution, but understood the wishes of the people, and fulfilled his obligations to them through his reforms (ibid. 107-8). Ober’s interpretation is based on a development of growing autonomy in the demos, and like McGlew, explains democracy as a decision to take power, which culminated in a revolt. His hypothesis tones down the personal role of Kleisthenes, in rejection of the Great Man-model and in favour of the demos as an independent force. The citizens were led by Kleisthenes, but took a decision of their own to oust the Spartans. In this light, the reforms become the mere confirmation of the wishes of the demos.

Ober’s hypothesis is criticised by Loren J. Samons II (1998 [2004]), for failing to explain the development of a political self-consciousness in the demos without resort to Great Men, like Solon and the tyrants (Samons 1998 [2004], 114). According to Samons, the Kleisthenes of Ober’s presentation is a neutral figure, without ties to the elite, which he surely was not. Rather, he sought power through the demos, much as a tyrant would have done, and combined this with an obliteration of the influence of the *phratriai* through his reforms (ibid. 115). His intentions, which Ober claims were to fulfil his obligations to his new *hetairoi*, are, according to Samons, unavailable to us (ibid. 117-19).

The analyses of these three scholars all emphasise the events of 508/7, and the various political tactics of the demos and members of the elite. Little attention is paid, however, to the grounds on which these tactics were formed. The tendency is, like with Fustel de Coulanges, to characterise Athenian history as one of gradual empowerment of the demos, through self-definition and violent action. Traditions for popular political participation are not treated as basis for a claim to power by the demos, neither is the development of political philosophy.

1.2.4 Political thought and societal change: Meier, Farrar

Christian Meier (1980) reads the development of the demand for *isonomia* in Athens as a combination of intellectual progress and reaction against social grievances. The reforms of

Kleisthenes resulted in *isonomia*, as a development of tendencies already present in the assemblies of primitive democracies (Meier 1980, 52-4). The 8th and 7th century was an intense phase of Greek cultural development: It was the time of colonisation. It was a time of crisis, in which broad distribution of power was strengthened. Tyrants came to power as leaders of the masses against the rich elite (Meier 1980, 61-2). In the 7th century, the ancient order before the reforms of Solon was replaced by a growing sense of common interest within communities. The colonising experience must have accentuated the lacks and advantages of different constitutions. Intellectual exchange in these formative years must have been intense, and contact with foreigners abroad may have stimulated political thinking (ibid. 69-71). The oracle at Delphi was an important place for the exchange of ideas and information during and after the time of colonisation (ibid. 73-5).

The belief that *eunomia*, just rule, was possible through active human agency is an important condition for Greek political philosophy (Meier 1980, 78-80). New values and virtues promoted broad participation in politics, in opposition to the elite. The masses demanded *dikē*; justice, and they saw themselves as the source for it (Meier 1980, 83). The *isonomia* of the 6th century was a result of the politisation of the agrarian community in the 8th and 7th century. The inclusion of peasants in the constitution changed the identity of the citizen (ibid. 87-8).

Meier's analysis is divided between philosophical developments on the one hand, which, perhaps influenced by experiences abroad, changed the Greek view of politics, and indigenous developments on the other, where peasant attitudes won favour in the polis, which resulted in *isonomia*. Presumably, few peasants took an active interest in philosophy, nor maintained international contacts with whom to exchange details on the constitutions of foreign cities. This link between philosophical developments and the politisation of the agrarian community is not self-evident. That a political philosophy of popular participation in the constitution found inspirations abroad, and was adapted to indigenous institutions, seems sounder, and of course such a development would have been the easier realised through a politically self-conscious demos.

A hypothesis along the same lines of thinking is that of Cynthia Farrar (1988). She examines the development of ideas about freedom defined as autonomy and absence from constraints. This philosophy made an ideal of the self-governed community ruled by its citizens. Her sources are Protagoras, Thukydides and Demokritos, for their examination of the sources to human well-being in a real society, rather than the idealists Plato and Aristotle (Farrar 1988, 11-15). This development changed the concept of responsibility, and made law,

rather than force, the ruling principle (ibid. 19-20). The Greeks' ideas of the political are characterised by collective self-expression and individual self-restraint (ibid. 38).

A problem with this way of analysing Greek political developments, is that all the non-philosophical, i.e. cultic and superstitious, elements of Greek political practice are ignored. The Greeks are attributed with having reasoned themselves out of unfair political situations, although no reference to philosophy is mentioned for any of the political reformers. Quite the contrary, the Athenian constitutional reforms are characterised through and through by references to the supernatural. They also bear the stamp of being practical measures, not theoretical proposals. Farrar has a point in explaining how the Greeks changed their constitution because they became increasingly aware of the individual and the mechanisms of a community. But this does not prove that philosophical achievements changed these communities. It might just as well have been the other way round.

1.2.5 The polis, hoplites and reforms: Meier, Hansen, Bleicken

Christian Meier (1980) regards Kleisthenes' reforms as a decisive step towards *isonomia*, but he cautions that the term *dēmokratia* as such did not exist by 508/7. Kleisthenes probably sought the support of the demos to secure his own power, and his ideas and motivations must have appealed to the demos (Meier 1980, 94-5). Developments in a democratic direction prior to these events (the reforms of Solon) may have tempered the effects of economic and political inequality, but did not sever the client-bonds within the phratries; the "Lebensraum" of Attican citizens (ibid. 98-9). There were some definite changes, however, after the end of the tyranny: The demos were angered by the conduct of Isagoras and the Spartans, and disenchanted by the tyrants. They demanded *isonomia*, and this was the basis for the reforms of Kleisthenes (ibid. 117-8). The developments spanning the 7th and 6th centuries were institutionalised in 508/7, and facilitated the identification of the demos with the polis and the constitution (ibid. 141-2).

Meier's thorough analysis of the emergence of the concept of politics among the Greeks makes little use of evidence outside Greece: It consistently explains the development of democracy in Athens as an indigenous development. He explains the developments of ideas of *isonomia* and equality among citizens, based on long-term processes, reactions to grievances, and philosophical innovations. One is tempted to ask why these things did not occur anywhere else, as well. Athens was perhaps the first ancient polity to develop a radical democracy, but it is nothing altogether singular about its history which should indicate that

only this polity could have had this constitution. Although Meier does mention instances of isonomia in other Greek poleis, Athens is somehow left to itself in political history, for all its parallels with other polities.

Mogens Herman Hansen (1991; 1993) explains the development of Athenian democracy on the background of military reforms. He argues that in Athens, and elsewhere in Greece, changes in the constitution were a corollary of changes in the fighting-forces. The hoplites replaced the mounted aristocrats, and were mainly recruited from the farmers (in Athens; the *zeugitai*) (Hansen 1991, 32). According to Hansen, military power led naturally to political power, so the tyrants were usually hoplite commanders who turned against their peers, and established tyranny with the help of the farmers (*ibid.*). Solon had divided the citizens into property-classes because of the hoplite-reform: The *zeugitai* demanded political power for their military contribution as hoplites (Hansen 1993, 116). Kleisthenes' reform of Attica was probably undertaken with "an eye to a New Model Army"; each of the ten *phylai* was to contribute with a regiment of hoplites (Hansen 1991, 34). Finally, the *thētes*, the poorest citizens, could demand political power because they served as rowers in the increasingly important Athenian navy (Hansen 1991, 36-7).

Hansen's analysis of Athenian democratic developments does the complexity of the source material little justice, by reducing the political reforms to practical measures prompted by military changes. The Athenians were involved in more than just warfare, and the history of political developments in general makes it very remarkable that the Athenians should know no other motivation for political change than army reforms.

Jochen Bleicken (1995) shares this view of Athenian constitutional developments, but emphasises Kleisthenes as instigator of the new order. Democracy was a result of complex changes in the political and social conditions which were unique to Athens. Therefore, democratic thinking might only originate there (Bleicken 1995, 19-20). These events included the appointment of judges in reaction to the crisis of the 7th century. In this tradition, Solon was elected Archon in 594/3, and charged with reconciling the rich elite with the impoverished peasants (*ibid.* 24-5). He sought to establish eunomia, and thereby broadened the basis for political participation (*ibid.* 29-30). A further event in the history of democracy was the establishment of tyranny, which contributed to the political consolidation of Attica and weakened the local influence of the aristocratic families (*ibid.* 38-40). The reforms of Kleisthenes were an attempt to strengthen the hoplites politically, but did not aim at establishing isonomia; it emerged as a consequence thereof. Kleisthenes also intended to strengthen his own position by siding with the demos (*ibid.* 42-3). The Athenian naval policy

of the early 5th century empowered the thetes, who served as rowers (ibid. 48-50). By the reforms of Ephialtes, the function of the Areopagos was taken over by the demos (ibid. 51-3).

Democracy was the product of these specific conditions of Athenian history in the 6th and 5th century (Bleicken 1995, 55). The laws of Solon emphasised the responsibility of every citizen for the city itself (ibid. 56-7). The tyranny of the Peisistratids had thoroughly weakened the aristocracy, and the military success of the hoplites consolidated the power of the peasants and citizens. They fought off the aristocrats and Spartans in 511/0, the tyrants and Persians in 490/89, and the Persians in 480/79. Aspiring nobles had no troops of local adherents they could draw on for support. They were thus bereft of a great deal of their previous basis of power, and lost political influence accordingly (ibid. 58-60). The replacement of a central ruling power by a rule of all was completed through the Ephialtic reforms. Every office holder was from now on under the supervision of everybody (ibid. 60-1).

Bleicken's account amounts to a more or less standard one, and has support in the extant sources on Athenian democracy. In its summary manner, however, it has no regard for a wider perspective on the cultural environment of Athens. Democracy may be explained as an internal development, but one should not forget the many foreign influences on Greek culture in the Archaic age. Many of the leading Athenian politicians had friendly relations with foreign powers, and it is unlikely that they should not have been influenced by their experiences in reforming the Athenian constitution. At least the importance of Delphi in making decisions about political changes suggests a reliance on influence and ideas from the outside world, and speaks against the interpretation of democracy as a wholly isolated and indigenous development.

1.2.6 Long term developments and the politics of equality: Gschnitzer, Qviller, Morris, Raaflaub

In his studies of pre-state Greek society, Bjørn Qviller (1981, 2003) emphasises the role played by empirical kinship groups and the *oikos* in Homeric society. He argues that societies organised in large noble households have a great potential for further evolution into states. Qviller's point of departure is the competitive aspect of gift-exchange among nobles in Homeric society. This competition resulted in a search for wealth that led to crises and conflicts preventing kingship from developing into a stable and lasting institution (ibid. 113).

The power of the king is based on his role as redistributor. Gift-giving and the need for wealth created contradictions that made royal rule untenable. Population pressure and changes

in military technology resulted in growing social tensions that favoured collective noble rule. This nobility was organised in a system of sharing public expenses through a liturgy system based on cooperation, rather than focused on the individual oikos and its resources (Qviller 1981, 114-5). Royal power was personal power, not resident in the office, and superiority was demonstrated by personal performance. This is structurally similar to the position of a big-man in primitive societies (ibid. 115-7). The charismatic character of Homeric kingship is further demonstrated by the importance of eloquence and rhetoric in political life (ibid. 119).

The maintenance of the highest position in Homeric society had to be reinforced by giving of gifts. Adherents and followers were won through gifts, and the ensuing obligation to reciprocate (Qviller 1981, 120-1). Gifts were part of the competitive culture among members of the elite, and contacts abroad were forged through giving of gifts (ibid. 124-5).

Qviller sees the distribution of the king's own landed property as a contributing factor to the demise of kingship in Ancient Greece. The basileus not only gave land to manumitted slaves, but also used estates as gifts to high-ranking followers. This might have undermined the rule of one basileus over others, and prompted collective rule (Qviller 1981, 132-4). The crises at the end of the Dark Age must have made it difficult for the royal oikos to bear the cost of increased warfare and simultaneously honour its obligations of lavish redistribution. An answer to such difficulties would be to divide the burden of rule on several noble households (ibid. 135-6).

Fritz Gschnitzer (1980 [2001]; 1991 [2001]) attacks both the use of anthropological terms to describe Homeric society, and the emphasis on the oikos as the institutional basis of society. Gschnitzer claims that the charismatic nature of Homeric leadership is a commonplace in politics ancient and modern. There was no undefined political sphere in the epics; redistribution played no important role (Gschnitzer 1991 [2001], 149-50).

Gschnitzer seeks to demonstrate that there was a constitutional order in the Homeric world: The Cyclops-episode in the *Odyssey* (Od. 9.106ff.) is taken as evidence that Homeric Greeks were a "Kulturvolk" having little in common with "Naturvölker", their society being characterized by politics and court sessions: "Mit diesen Versen hat uns das Epos die Frage, ob bei den Griechen der homerischen Zeit Staat und Recht schon ausgebildet waren, selbst beantwortet" (Gschnitzer 1991 [2001], 158-9). He claims that the Homeric epics describe political institutions precisely in their not functioning, because the epic situation is one of crisis and war (Gschnitzer 1980 [2001], 193). Institutions like the council of *gerontes* and *basileis*, described in Homer, are found in historical times. The oath sworn by the members of these councils is taken as evidence of a political constitution (ibid. 195). Gschnitzer argues

that the Homeric world in general is a Classical society described in vague terms (Gschnitzer 1991 [2001], 163-4).

Qviller and Gschnitzer have diametrically different views concerning the interpretation of the Homeric evidence: Qviller demonstrates how Homeric institutions may point forward to later Greek political developments, whereas Gschnitzer starts in the other end, and attempts to place Classical institutions in the Homeric world. Where Qviller is explicit in his methodology, Gschnitzer refuses to examine the Homeric world as a parallel to pre-industrial, primitive societies. This seems to be based on an assumption that primitive societies are without culture. Anthropological models are well suited for a comparative study of ancient cultures, for their focus on economic and social structures on a pre-state level. There is a danger in all comparisons in ignoring differences and over-emphasise similarities, but Gschnitzer's categorical denial of the importance of the *oikos* and charismatic leadership in Homeric society is to ignore the evidence. Qviller's analysis is interesting for its demonstration of the economic causes for a development of egalitarian structures, as an alternative to kingship, and how this may have formed a basis for the later democratic polities.

Ian Morris (1987; 1996; 1999; 2000) ascribes the democratic institutions of Athens to the emergence of an egalitarian culture among male citizens. He has a *longue dur e* approach to explaining the emergence of a middling ideology in Archaic Greece. His analysis of Archaic Greek archaeological sources, Archaic poetry and epic literature concludes that the Greeks in the Dark Age developed an egalitarian culture. He argues that this culture was special to Greece. The point of departure in his analysis is a "Strong Principle of Equality". This principle is what made the Athenian *demos* decline a new elite rule in 508/7 (Morris 2000, 110-11).

The Athenian citizens had an idea of themselves as *metrioi* and *philoï*, reasonable, temperate men, and friends; they were male, decent, self-sufficient farmers on their own land, and they nurtured a common friendship to each other and the community. This society was egalitarian, and they made decisions through public deliberation in assemblies (Morris 1996, 21-3; 2000, 116-18). This insistence on the equality of all local-born men made Athenian democracy possible. Morris seeks the emergence of this culture in developments in 8th century Greek Archaic culture (Morris 2000, 155).

He argues that massive social changes took place across Greece in the 8th century, resulting in antithetical cultures; an international elite culture against local middling values. The defeat of elite ideology in the 6th century made citizen democracy plausible as a form of government (Morris 2000, 156-7). The best sources to the emergence of middling values are

Hesiod's *Works and Days* (Morris 1996, 28-31; 2000, 163-71), and archaeology. A victory for middling values is evident from graves. He argues that the shift from lavish spending on funeral cults and burials to offering of votives to communal sanctuaries in the 8th century marks a revolution in values (Morris 1996, 24-5).

This revolution was not without precedent. The distribution of grave goods at Lefkandi, especially the contrast between simple burials and burials containing precious and exotic grave goods from ca. 1000 BCE onwards, makes Morris compare the finds at the site to the Hesiodic "Myth of the Races" (Morris 1999, 70-8; 2000, 228-238). Thus, the conflict between an elite identifying themselves with a "Race of Heroes" and an internally egalitarian elite belonging to the "Race of Iron" had its beginnings already about 1000 BCE. The beginnings of the conflict resulting in a "Strong Principle of Equality" and, ultimately, Athenian democracy, must therefore be sought in Dark Age developments. The important changes, however, took place in the 8th century (Morris 2000, 256).

Male citizen communities severed their ties to the heroic past and the exotic east, distancing themselves from external sources of authority. This development is the emergence of the polis, with its rigid definition of the citizen as a free, local male, in opposition to foreigners, women and slaves (Morris 2000, 306). This middling culture was the precondition for Athenian male democracy (ibid. 312). Athenian changes in burial reflect the rise of the polis; the extension of formal burial to a broader segment of the community in the 8th century corresponds to an identification of the polity with its inhabitants. According to Morris, the polis idea was overturned at Athens around 700 BCE, and was replaced by a structure similar to that of the Dark Age, where only the *agathoi*, and not the *kakoi*, were given formal burial. There was a shift toward the polis ideal again, however, which was recognised in the Kleisthenic reforms (Morris 1987, 216). Acceptance of middling values in the 6th century made democracy possible, and democratic institutions became an obvious response to the fall of the elite at Athens in 508/7 (Morris 1996, 28).

Morris presents an indigenous, evolutionary model, with a primary reference to Hesiod. His hypothesis is based on analyses of archaeological material, and is especially interesting for its inclusion of the Dark Age in the history of democracy. His argument that Greeks turned away from the Near East in the 11th century is based on finds from Lefkandi, and archaeological evidence for Greeks in the Near East in the same period may argue against this conclusion. The main point, however, is that Greek cultural developments towards an egalitarian society started this early. Morris maintains that the fundamental change towards democracy took place in the 8th century: Ideas of freedom and equality took hold in Greek

societies, and ultimately led to the Athenian radical democracy. This interpretation is based on the analysis of democracy as a cultural phenomenon, instead of reading democratic ideas as the result of democratic institutions (cf. Hansen 1991, 320).

Kurt A. Raaflaub (1988 [2004]) argues that the people and assembly play an important role in Homer, also in jurisdiction and the witnessing of public acts. They form a large part of the army, and fight in ranks reminiscent of the later phalanx. Raaflaub argues that there are instances of social criticism in the epics, such as Thersites' scolding of Agamemnon in the assembly (cf. Il. 2. 225-77). Homer describes the relationships between unequals as well as equals in the polis, and creates positive and negative models of social behaviour. By relating the consequences of such behaviour to the well-being of the community, Homer introduces political thought in Greece (Raaflaub 1988 [2004], 32-3). Raaflaub argues that Greek political thought is different from any predecessor or parallel development in other civilizations, because it focuses its attention upon man's responsibility for the well-being of the community. In examining the reasons why Archaic Greece experienced this singular development, he lists the following distinct features: First, Archaic Greece had no dominant sacred kingship. Second, there were no large, centralised territorial states. Third, the aristocrats were unable to dominate the substantial middle class of independent farmers, the future hoplite classes. Fourth, the crisis of the 7th century accentuated these conflicts. Fifth, the individual solutions to these crises created an environment for innovation and comparison between the poleis, especially during the colonising period. All these points contributed to the development of political thought (ibid. 34-6).

Lowell Edmunds (1988 [2004]) comments on the paper of Raaflaub cited above, and he is sceptical to the analysis of assembly situations in the Iliad as political. He argues that the fundamental situation, the siege of Troy, is not a political one, because the bonds of *philia* between the *basileis* are of a pre-political or apolitical nature (Edmunds 1988 [2004], 41-2). Against Raaflaub, he interprets the Thersites-episode in the Iliad as a vindication of kingship, because the protagonist of the masses is beaten and shamed. Not denying the importance of the masses in the Iliad, he asks whether Homer actually conceives of assigning them a different position in society. His answer is in the negative, saying there is no definitive evidence for criticism of the nobility in Homer (ibid. 43-4).

Raaflaub interprets the Homeric poems as indications of political conflict. Rather than an evolution of egalitarianism within an elite, which might later develop into forms of communal rule, he emphasises dissent and protest on the part of the masses. In his interpretation, a development towards democracy can be seen in protests against the rule of

kings and the elite. Edmunds argues that there is no criticism of the nobility in Homer, and further cautions that the bonds within the elite are pre-political. But that these bonds of *philia* are pre-political, does not mean that they are not relations of power. They may still be significant for the later development of Greek politics.

Raaflaub maintains that Greek politics and political thought was an internal Greek development even during the colonisation period, by assuming that the Greek poleis only compared themselves with other Greeks. In later political treatises, like the *Politics* of Aristotle, this is not the case, and it seems strange that the Archaic Greeks should have been more particular. In the very internationalism of the colonial venture lies the key to understand many foreign influences in Greek culture. Cultural exchange is well attested for earlier centuries as well, for which the Greek adoption of the Phoenician alphabet is a good example. The argument that no societies prior to Archaic Greece, or indeed outside the Greek world, had concepts of man's responsibility for the well-being of the community is a generalisation which cannot be maintained: The outcome of deliberations in public assemblies is the driving element behind many decisions and actions in accounts of events from Ancient Near Eastern history and mythology. There is, of course, a question of degree; as to the extent to which man can alter his fate through his own decision, and is held responsible for his own situation. On the other hand; there is no lack of references to divine intervention, fate and explanations based on the supernatural, neither in Homer nor in later sources to Greek political culture.

1.2.7 Democracy from Phoenicia: Gschnitzer, Sommer

A few scholars have attempted to explain the Greek polis and Athenian democracy as phenomena contingent with the Phoenician city-states and colonies of the 10th century onwards, because they share traits with the Levantine city-states and Punic Carthage.

Fritz Gschnitzer (1988 [2001]; 1993 [2001]) argues that the city-state may be a foreign element in Greece, replacing an older confederate type of "Stammstaat"⁶ which was still evident in Boiotia and Thessaly in antiquity (Gschnitzer 1988 [2001], 236). The Phoenician city-states of the Levant could have served as models for the Greeks (ibid. 237-8). This may have taken place during the Greek and Phoenician colonisation movements (ibid. 243). The same process may have spread the city-state to Lykian and Karian Anatolia. These are known from the 5th century onwards (ibid. 244-45).

⁶ Presumably *ethnos*, a Greek type of state contemporary with the *polis*.

Gschnitzer maintains, cautiously, that the similarities between Phoenician and Greek constitutions are unlikely to be coincidental, in light of the close interaction between Greeks and Phoenicians in the first millennium. He regards the development of city-states in the first millennium as a continuous historical process; the Phoenicians were heirs to the Near Eastern city-states of the 3rd and 2nd millennium, and spread the city-state to the Aegean through their colonies in the 8th century (ibid. 246). The Greeks adopted the city-state, like the alphabet, from the Phoenicians (ibid. 247). Political changes towards democracy, however, are interpreted as a development peculiar to the Greeks. According to Gschnitzer, the first democratic developments took place in 6th century Aegean Greece (ibid. 248).

Michael Sommer (2000) argues that Greek democracy may have been due to Phoenician cultural influences. The Levantine coastal cities were traditionally ruled by kings, and the main political institution was the palace. Sommer argues that this changed after the 13th century: The palace-elite was weakened and lost influence to a class of entrepreneurs with a wide mercantile network. The constitutional change in the Phoenician cities was a result of an “Ausbettung” of the economic sphere from the societal framework, making way for a profit-seeking class of independent merchant-entrepreneurs. Where economic transactions of the Late Bronze Age had been characterised by gift-exchange, the economy of the Iron Age resembled a modern market economy (ibid. 262).

The Phoenicians established contact with Greeks, through trading in the Aegean. This caused profound economic, cultural and political changes, through Greek acculturation to Phoenician practices. An example is the adoption of Phoenician letters (Sommer 2000, 273-6). Soon, however, the Greeks were able to interact with the Phoenicians as peers (ibid. 282-4).

Both Gschnitzer and Sommer claim that the Greek polis was modelled on the Phoenician city-state, and suggest the colonial ventures of the 8th and 7th century as the period of transmission. Gschnitzer is unclear on why exactly this occurred, and his argument that the polis is foreign to Greek politics is altogether unconvincing. The fundamental political structures of the polis, i.e. the council and the assembly, are evident from Homer and Hesiod, and there is little to suggest that a different kind of political organisation was original in Greece. The structural similarities, however, between Greek poleis and Phoenician city-states are interesting, although Gschnitzer’s sources are quite late regarding the period in question. Gschnitzer shrinks from allowing any Near Eastern influence on Athenian democracy.

Sommer argues the existence of a Phoenician market economy in the Iron Age, which emancipated merchant-entrepreneurs and made collective rule possible. This is difficult to

accept, because of the manifest lack of international institutions which could have made a market economy possible in the Iron Age. He describes the Greeks as passive recipients of foreign influences, as though they had no political organisation before the 8th century. There is enough evidence to argue that the Greek city-state was influenced by Phoenician constitutions, but there is very little evidence for how the Phoenician city-states were actually governed. It might therefore seem ill advised to attempt an explanation of the polis on the basis of Phoenician influences. It should at any rate be made clear in what respects and to what extent the Greek and Phoenician polities were similar, and not merely claimed that the Greeks were instructed by Phoenician traders on how to govern themselves.

1.2.8 Conclusion

There is a wide range of approaches to the problem of the origins and evolution of democracy. Explanations vary as much according to the length of the period one takes into consideration as they do according to methodological approach and evaluation of sources. The most promising approach for an analysis of the origins of democracy, which aims at an explanation of the emergence of democratic culture and practice, seems to be a *longue durée* examination of the material. This, combined with a view to foreign influences on Greek culture, may give a more nuanced view of the history of democracy. This is not in opposition to the results of scholars working within a shorter time-span or limiting their field of study to indigenous developments in Athens, such as the reforms or the development of democratic institutions. It is rather a widening of the field of study, in order to explain phenomena more exhaustively, and put them in relation to a cultural environment and within a longer history.

1.3 The beginning of politics – a method

The following is devoted to theories on pre-state politics and political discourse, to clarify the theoretical concepts used in this analysis of the origins and development of Athenian democracy. Some initial questions form the basis of this inquiry: How does a pre-state society work? How and why does it change? How does the state evolve, and how does it work?

Economy and politics are inseparable from culture. In a pre-state society, political and economic structures must be studied as cultural phenomena. Relations of power are not institutionalised. With the emergence of the city-state, political structures can be studied as institutions. The way these institutions work, however, is dependent upon their cultural past.

Athenian democracy is a constitution peculiar to the city-state: The citizens equal the polity, and they rule themselves. Their identity as citizens is bound to the city through common activities, such as cultic festivals, warfare and political deliberation. The emergence of the polis in Ancient Greece is not documented by direct evidence. Its development can be traced to the Dark Age, but no written evidence is available until the 8th century. Epic literature makes it possible to reconstruct early Greek society, but the evolution of the polis is still a hotly debated question.

The evolution of city-states began in Mesopotamia. This development is documented through archaeological evidence. From the middle of the 3rd millennium, there are texts which give information on how these city-state societies might have been organised. There are, however, many things one does not know, and models of early city-state society are to some extent based on theoretical assumptions about human society and economy, rather than direct evidence. The origins of the Mesopotamian city-state are at any rate better documented than the origins of the Greek polis. Therefore, concepts from models used to describe the development of the city-state will be used here to describe the development of the polis.

In this thesis, concepts such as stratification, reciprocity and competitive generosity are used to describe the mechanism behind the evolution of the polis. These concepts are taken from anthropology, but have also been used to describe pre-state societies in Mesopotamia and Ancient Greece. They are useful, because they describe relations of power as the result of interaction within a culture, and not as abstract institutions.

1.3.1 The stratification of society

The origins of the state must be sought in the necessity for and ability to unite the work of many people in common enterprises. The problem is the step from a society based on kinship groups to a society based on ties transcending the family. The emergence of societal unity and leadership are phenomena necessary to explain in order to understand the origins of the state.

The question of the origins of the state has been answered in many ways, roughly divided into two schools. One is the model of Elman Service (Service 1975), where government is conceived as a ready form of organisation, which the local inhabitants are convinced or forced to join. Service postulates chiefdom as an intermediary level between egalitarian segmental societies and true states. Another is the model of Morton Fried (Fried 1967), which is an evolutionary model where society goes through different stages of economic and political organisation. These are termed egalitarian, ranked and stratified society.

1.3.2 From egalitarian to rank society

Morton Fried calls an egalitarian society a society in which there are enough valued statuses for any number of persons to fill. The number of status positions is adjustable with the number of members in the given society (Fried 1967, 33-34). An egalitarian society needs have a fundamentally egalitarian economy, governed by a system of generalised reciprocity (Fried 1967, 35-36). Generalised reciprocity is a system of putatively altruistic transactions, with an indefinite expectation of reciprocity (Sahlins 1972, 193-194).

Egalitarian society will evolve into a ranked society as the number of valued statuses becomes less than the number of persons wishing to fill them (Fried 1967, 110). This implies that a spectrum of ranks or statuses evolves, based on the access to and exploitation of resources. These resources are redistributed within the community, and convey greater status on those who redistribute them. Such individuals rise to the status of big-men; they give from their household-production to other members of their society, increasing their personal prestige and power. The authority of a big-man rests on the obligations created by gifts, which result in a hierarchy of patrons and clients. Redistribution or pooling of resources has its locus on the level of the village or larger organisational unit (Fried 1967, 117-118).

It is through the role of feast-giver and host at celebrations that the person of rank shows greatest influence on the productivity of his society. The big-man organises work-parties to encourage maximum output by a number of his followers (Fried 1967, 133-134). The redistribution of scarce resources such as animal proteins and alcohol act as an incentive to work, and may result in calendars of more or less fixed celebrations throughout the agricultural year.

Sahlins called this system of rank differentiation from the prestige of giving away gifts chiefly redistribution. It is characterised by an extensive social integration of the dues and obligations of leadership (Sahlins 1972, 209). Reciprocity and rank are dependent on an ethos of generosity from nobility, and nobility from generosity (Sahlins 1972, 207). The political order of a rank society is based on a flow of goods up and down the social hierarchy. The generalised gifts not requiring a direct requital compel loyalty (Sahlins 1972, 206). Thus, generosity is a starting mechanism of leadership, because it creates followers (Sahlins 1972, 208). A big-man system of reciprocities merges into a chiefly system, but the latter is in principle centralised, and not based on the personal labour and wealth of the big-man and his

household. The leader in a redistribution-system is the central recipient and bestower of favours.

The concepts of big-man, redistribution and generosity will be used to explain several of the relations of power encountered in the sources for this thesis. They continue to work even on state-level, especially in exchange-relations between leaders, and in the establishment of foreign contacts. The principles of exchange in primitive societies may shed light on the phenomenon of trade in pre-industrial, pre-monetary economies. Further, explanations of power-relations based on these concepts emphasise modes of political interaction, rather than specific political institutions, and are therefore useful for examining structural similarities between cultures.

1.3.3 Stratified society

Stratified society is a theoretical concept, and forms an intermediary stage between a rank society and the true state. Sanctions and power rests outside the kinship system, creating a new kind of authority. The differentiated access to resources seen in ranked society is institutionalised, and creates the possibility of exploiting human labour (Fried 1967, 185-186). This limitation of access is a self-amplifying process, and results in one or more groups controlling the available resources. Indirect access for certain members of society may be the result of ecological or geographical circumstances, which result in a need for trade. Limited access to resources create the exploitation of labour at the expense of those with impeded right of access, in favour of the holder of unimpeded right of access (ibid. 188-189). This process of stratification includes the concept of private property (ibid. 191).

Several explanations for this process have been suggested, such as population pressure, ecological changes or warfare. An explanation from ecological reasons such as demographic pressure is denied by Robert McC. Adams (Adams 1966 [1973], 44-45), whereas Fried is more optimistic (Fried 1967, 197-204). Explanations from technological innovations; e.g. that the building of a canal-system in Mesopotamia created a despotic state ruled by a bureaucratic elite which controlled the water, such as in the “hydraulic hypothesis” of Karl Wittvogel (in Fried 1967, 207-213), are generally rejected today. The fact that resources become limited with the growth of populations, and that those in control of these resources will strive to maintain that control, seems evident. At the same time, there are counter-effects from the redistribution of wealth, and the emergence of leadership based on competitive generosity.

From the stratified stage of political organisation emerges the state. Fried defines the state as the way power is organised beyond the family and household. It enjoys a monopoly on violence and maintains the order of stratification (Fried 1967, 235). Military activities define its borders, and maintain its internal sovereignty (ibid. 237-238).

Elman Service states that the primal government worked to protect itself, and not elite interest. Government does not evolve as an instrument to maintain a stratified society; the government is the institutionalisation of centralised leadership. Political power organised the economy, not vice versa; bureaucracy works as an allocative, not an acquisitive system (Service 1975, 8). Rather than working with economic models, Service emphasises the importance of theocratic governmental institutions, and how they counter the violent tendencies inherent in any society through abolishing violence (ibid. 307). The power of a government is proved by its lack of violent measures to control its citizens. Thus the state is not a result of a proprietor class defending its own interests, but of a consensus reached by its citizens on the most economical way of avoiding danger and death. The political sphere starts where the family ends: The political starts where somebody outside the family has a right to interfere with how things are run within the domestic sphere (ibid. 54).

The Greek polis went through a phase of stratification before it became a city-state: This may be seen in the Homeric epics, where there is a conflict between domestic jurisdiction and communal laws, such as the situation with the Suitors and Penelope in the *Odyssey*. Telemachos appeals to the community for help, through the assembly, but is nevertheless left to his own resources to resolve the conflict: The community lacks the necessary sanctions to prevent the Suitors from behaving as they please, and delegates the responsibility to the involved households. There are, on the other hand, many instances of state-like structures in Homer, such as the councils and assemblies, and city-communities. Power is not held solely by charismatic leaders, and there are appeals to general laws and principles of behaviour throughout the epics, indicating a development of the concept of a political society. The polis grew out of Homeric society.

1.3.4 A model for societal change

Jonathan Friedman, choosing the Kachin of the Upper Burma as a point of departure, has created a model for the study of societies oscillating between egalitarian, ranked and stratified social forms. The model, in general terms, consists of three interacting levels; the political superstructure, the relations of production, and the productive forces, including the ecological environment. These levels will work on each other in terms of dominance and constraints, in

the sense that the superstructure will be dictated by the relations of production, which are in their turn constrained both by the productive forces and the ecosystem. These effects will produce transformations inside the different levels, thus making it possible to analyse the reproduction of social patterns as an effect dependent upon the interplay of these levels (Friedman 1984, 162-163).

Social change is a constant process dependent on how the relationships between production, ecosystem and society develop. This model is quite useful as a rule of thumb concerning what to look for when analysing changes in a society. Changes in technology to overcome ecological challenges may create new economical and social relations, which then reproduce themselves or change according to their success, or functionality, within the given society. In like manner, changes in political organisation in response to economic and social relations will affect attitudes to technological innovation and responses to ecological circumstances.

Friedman's example, the Kachin, have two forms of political organization, the egalitarian *gumlao* and the hierarchical *gumsa* (Friedman 1984, 168).⁷ Through the giving of food at community feasts (*manao*), a family capable of producing a surplus may attain great prestige in its community. This affects the position of the family in the circle of wife-giving, as the wives from high-ranking families catch greater bride-prices. The new wealth may then be invested in more wives, which produce a larger family with the potential of giving yet larger feasts. This dual function of giving feasts, namely the confirmation of a family's status and the self-perpetuation of feast-giving through its positive effects, creates even more surplus and results in a spiral of ranking. The families capable of paying and demanding the same bride-prices shut themselves out from the general circle, and become an elite. There are now different levels of families with equal status among themselves, but not upwards and downwards (ibid. 170-171).

In *gumsa* society, all lineage relations between the head of the lineage and other families are converted into age categories dependent upon the distance to the chiefly line. This creates a conical clan, at whose head one finds the common tribal ancestor. These matrilineal relations continue to work throughout a large geographical area, as the local segmentary

⁷ The Kachin practice generalised exchange, which means they reject endogamy and restrict exchange of wives. Each bridegroom must make contact with outsiders to get a bride. This evolves into a circle of wife-givers (*mayu*) and wife-takers (*dama*), where who gives women to whom is organised. The giving of a wife gives the highest status, resulting in ranking. Bride-prices vary with the family's prestige. The local lineages are only constant in their exogamous relations, and kin is constantly turned into allies. Thus, a pattern for a hierarchic society is an effect of the generalised exchange (Friedman 1984, 169).

relationships are part of the system of the conical clan. The chief receives tribute and corvée from his dependants, usurping the place of local spirits, but demanding grander gifts. This wealth is redistributed at communal feasts (Friedman 1984, 175-179).

The resulting inequality in wealth at some point results in debt, which leads to trouble and may result in a revolt. Since surplus is invested in relative rank and not in capital as such, this devaluation of social status is devastating to the chiefs. *Gumsa* society turns again into a *gumlao* society (Friedman 1984, 185-186).

Homeric society is characterised by charismatic leadership and fluctuating positions of power. Leaders gain adherents through redistribution of wealth, especially by feasting and giving of gifts. In like manner, relations between leaders are established through giving of gifts. The egalitarian culture which evolved in 8th century Greece may have been due to conflicts within the elite, and pressure against leaders unable to keep up their dominance through redistribution to share power.

Even though polis society institutionalised largesse and redistribution through a liturgy system and restrictions on the display of wealth, Athenian politicians tried to win adherents through distribution of wealth even in the 5th century. The rise of tyrants is a further example of a rise to prominence through redistribution: The tyrant becomes the friend and protector of the people against other elite families. Most tyrants spent lavishly on public architecture and festive display. This kind of one-man rule often ran short economically after a while, and power was again shared among the elite families. The model may also be useful for describing the causes and effects of popular revolt: The Solonian reforms were prompted by civil unrest caused by debt-bondage, and furthered the demand for isonomia in Athens.

1.3.5 The gift and the Greek polis

The giving of gifts played a decisive role in establishing and consolidating ties of friendship and differences in rank in Greek society. This is a well-known phenomenon described in anthropological literature such as the works of Marcel Mauss and Marshall Sahlins. There are many types of reciprocity, the main difference being the recipient's ability to return a gift. The general urge to give something in return creates a gulf between those who can reciprocate and those who cannot. But there are situations where giver and recipient are on par with each other, the recipient being able and willing to return gifts in like measure to what is received. The reciprocity is balanced. Sahlins, writing on the phenomenon of reciprocity and exchange, states that such social compacts, i.e. balanced reciprocity, in contrast to generalised

reciprocity, work to transform interests, from separate to harmonious, between the giver and the recipient. This means that the sides fore-go their self-interest in a willingness to strike equality. Instead of trying to profit on the other, and receive more than is given, both sides strive to give in like measure as is given (Sahlins 1972, 219-220).

The working of such reciprocity seems to be the restatement of the relationship between parts and the confirmation of their status. Balanced reciprocity may work in circles of givers and receivers, with a constant dynamic of temporary indebtedness. Gifts thus go from hand to hand, and the giver may have unfulfilled obligations to other givers, in like measure as his recipients owe him gifts in their turn. This network, in contrast to a market, is especially focused on the exchange of goods of prestige, although obtaining food also motivates such exchange. It is not necessarily based on kin-ship (Sahlins 1972, 225-226).

The giving of gifts exalts the giver and strengthens his position in society to the extent that a receiver who cannot reciprocate becomes his underling (Qviller 1981, 120). The most effective way of producing excess wealth in early societies is by having a large family, with wives or concubines and children to do the work (Qviller 2003, 5). The main gift in this economy is food. The food produced in the household or controlled by a redistributor is given away at special occasions, which can take the form of work-parties, war-parties or religious festivals. The prestige and wealth produced by such communal activities befalls the sponsor, thus paving the way for a type of ruler very much like the Homeric basileus, whose position is depending on the giving of gifts. The building of position through spending is obvious in the case of the Cretan warlord Kastor, an alias of Odysseus, who manages to man nine ships by paying off the warriors with a six-day feast. He is a leader because he is an effective raider and commander, but the loyalty of his men is bought with food (Od.14.199-51; see also Qviller 1981, 119-120; 2003, 6). The feasting of the Homeric heroes is confirming the balance of power, the giver of the feast being the leader.

Throughout the Homeric epics, the basileis are constantly giving each other gifts. The source of these gifts is their own household, the work of the local inhabitants or gifts that are passed on. Helen presents Telemachos with a garment she has weaved herself (Od.15.125-129), whereas Menelaos gives him a silver bowl which he in turn was given by Phaidimos, the king of Sidon (Od.15.115-119). When Odysseus leaves the Phaiakaeans, each chieftain gives him a tripod and cauldron, an expensive gift for which they will demand recompense from the people (Od.13.13-15). The people have to carry the expenses when guests are welcomed as well, as when Odysseus claims to be a Cretan who has housed Odysseus and his men, gathering food and wine from the local inhabitants to serve them (Od.19.194-198).

Odysseus intends to get recompense for the wealth consumed by the Suitors from their own households and from the Achaeans in general (Od.24.356-358).

Mauss, in his important work *Essai sur le Don – forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques* (1950 [1995]), examines the role and importance of gift-giving in pre-modern societies in Polynesia and elsewhere. Many of the institutions and processes he describes could easily have come from Homeric Greece. Two cases in point are the *kula* and *uvalaku* of the inhabitants of the Trobriand-islands. The *kula*, which means circle, is a kind of potlatch, i.e. a chief's lavish spending of goods in an institutionalised competition of ostentative wealth. But the *kula* goes further, in that the participating chiefs travel from island to island, fulfilling obligations to give gifts and receiving them in turn. The *kula* also involves gathering tribute from subordinate chiefs, but is separated from the *gimwali*, i.e. the economic exchange of useful goods (Mauss 1995, 55). Thus, the chiefs participate in a network of exchange focused on status-goods, which confirm their relative status and strengthen their position. The *uvalaku* is a special kind of *kula*, in which the chiefs travel without anything to exchange, not even to barter for food, but simply gather gifts. These maritime expeditions of receiving gifts are reversed the following year, the recipients thus repaying the givers in their turn when they come on visit (Mauss 1995, 56).

These institutions are quite similar to the economic strategies of the sea-faring Homeric heroes: Telemachos and his companions visit Menelaos in Sparta, and they marvel at the great wealth displayed in his hall. Menelaos relates how he got it on his extensive travels: For eight years he had roamed the Mediterranean and gathered all kinds of treasures, which he curiously enough characterises as “means of living” (Od. 4.71-92). The phrase for this tour of treasure-gathering is *polyn bioton synageirōn ēlōmēn*, i.e. “roaming about collecting much means of living” (Od.4.90-91). Whether these were gifts, plunder or bartered goods is not specified, but probably were gifts: During their stay in Egypt, Menelaos and Helen received precious gifts of gold and silver from Polybos, the ruler of Egyptian Thebes, and his wife Alkandre (Od.4.123-132). Agamemnon received a silver bowl with golden rim from Phaidimos, the king of Sidon, when he visited him on his way home from Troy (Od.4.611-619).

This resembles an *uvalaku*: The king travels empty-handed from court to court, receiving precious gifts which are later displayed in his hall and given away to prominent guests. The reciprocation of these gifts is performed at any fortunate occasion, and does not seem to be institutionalised. On the other hand, a gift held a promise of a return. Laertes, when hearing of the fabulous gifts his son Odysseus had received in foreign countries, bewails

the loss of the giver: Laertes believes Odysseus is dead, and thus unable to reciprocate. He, who gives a gift, has a claim to a gift (Od.24.263-284).

Like in the Polynesian kula, the gifts are magnificent and precious, and considered even more valuable if they have been in the possession of somebody famous. The giving of precious gifts is, like in Polynesia, restricted to the elite. The gifts are valuable in themselves, but their prime function is that of bonding. This is clearly stated by Menelaos, as he sends Telemachos away with promises of despatching him home with precious gifts: *autar epeita/ dōsō kalon aleison, hina spendēistha theoisin/ athanatois emethen memnēmenos ēmata panta*, i.e. “and then I will give you a lovely goblet, so that when you pour libations to the immortal gods, you shall remember me all days” (Od.4.587-592).

Gifts played a central role in establishing power for basileis, and in maintaining good relations between elite members. The Greeks established relations with other cultures in the Mediterranean, such as the Phoenicians, and exchanged precious metals, oil, wine and other goods with them. In the same process of exchange with foreigners, they adopted the alphabet. The Greek city-state may also have been influenced by these contacts with the wider Mediterranean environment, as city-civilization survived the Dark Age in the Levant, whereas no urban centres are known from Greece at this time.

1.3.6 Discourse and democracy

Greek society valued the spoken word. Rhetoric was an important element of political deliberation, and is evident from Homer and Hesiod, and throughout Greek political history. The main political institutions, the council and the assembly, were governed by rules of discourse, which meant that one entered an already existing field of meaning and form when one participated in politics. Speech had to conform to certain rules to be considered political, and had to conform to a certain rationale to be considered reasonable and useful.

The Athenian democracy is characterised by its emphasis on *isegora* and *parrhesia*, the equal access to public speech and deliberation. Rüdiger Bubner argues that the aim of political work in the polis was the confirmation of political unity through common action and the deliberative discussion of problematic issues (Bubner 2002, 87). The political existence of mankind is an existence in speech. Political speech regards exactly that which is not clear, in deliberation on what should be considered harmful or useful in a given situation (ibid. 88). To Bubner, democracy is deliberation; speech is not restricted to giving information or exchanging signs, but for active determination of what is good or bad. Therefore, deliberative

speech, rather than party-programs, forms the basis of Greek politics. In Athenian democracy, *logos* was open to all; everybody could, if they would, participate in discussion, without further rules (ibid. 89). Political influence was only possible through spoken contributions, also for magistrates. The authority of these contributions depended on the status of the speaker (ibid. 90).

There were rules of discourse in Athenian assemblies. In a sense, these political assemblies were “societies of discourse”. This is a concept used by Michel Foucault to describe traditions of speech bordering on ritual, but at the same time emphasising the performance and use of the rules by those who share the knowledge (Foucault 1971 [1999], 23-4). Speaking in the assembly was open to every citizen, but not anyone could speak to an effect. The Greeks maintained an order of discourse which inhibited the political participation of those who did not master its rules. Educated members of the elite had a significant political advantage in their knowledge of how to speak and behave in the council and the assembly.

The Greeks made political issues out of almost everything; any aspect of life could be deliberated in public, and every citizen had to participate. *Isegoria* was a democratic virtue; the freedom to participate in speech. This is in contrast to modern society, as defined by Jürgen Habermas: Private autonomy means that one is entitled to not have an opinion, and one is not required to give reasons for one’s acts or decisions in public (Habermas 1992 [1998], 152-3). On the other hand, conceptions of law and justice must be based on a principle of discourse, which takes the form of a democratic principle. This lends legitimacy to the institutionalisation of law, as a logical genesis of rights (ibid. 154-5).

This means that although Athenian democracy was in some respects restricted, the general principle of common deliberation could turn the rules of discourse in favour of the *demos*: The participants in the assembly had to understand what was being said for any speech to be effective, in the same way as a level of political education would be attained through the regular participation in assemblies and councils. Therefore, the discourse of democracy made political participation open and available to more people, not less, even for its emphasis on rhetoric and skill in performance. The constant deliberation on almost any issue or aspect of civic life made Athens a thoroughly politicised society.

1.3.7 Conclusion

The relevant methodological concepts for this thesis from anthropological studies are stratification, redistribution, generosity, reciprocity, and gift-giving. Stratification involves the

evolution of states through unequal access to the means of production. Redistribution means that the surplus is administered by a central authority, which becomes the focus of economic activity. This may be individual leaders, redistributing their own property among adherents. This is a kind of generosity, and forms the basis of power for big-men and charismatic leaders. Reciprocity regulates the power-relations in a stratified society: Those who can give become superior to those who cannot give in return.

Redistribution also operates on the level of the state, and is institutionalised in cultic activities, or as state payment for public works. Reciprocity regulates relations both between members of a stratified society, through bonds of clientship, and between members of the elite. Further, relationships between political leaders and states are ruled by the principles of reciprocity in pre-market economies. Trade takes the form of exchange, based on principles of reciprocity rather than of profit-seeking mechanisms. This means that cultural involvement is likely to result from material exchange: Partners in an exchange relation not only exchange goods, but enter social and, often, political relations.

In the analysis of political institutions such as councils and assemblies, emphasis will be laid on the rules of discourse, to determine to what extent these institutions are democratic, or indicate a development towards democracy. By comparing the rules of discourse in different political societies, it might be possible to learn more about how they worked, and in what ways they differed or were similar to Athenian democracy.

These methodological concepts, then, form the basis for the present inquiry into the origins of democracy. I focus on cultural history and discourse analysis rather than institutional history, because the aim of this thesis is to trace the history of democracy as a practice in political societies, rather than an ideology or a set of institutions.

1.4 Sources

The early Greek polis and Greek activities in the Mediterranean, especially exchange with Anatolia and the Levant, interaction with Phoenicians in the colonies, and deposits of votives in Greek sanctuaries, can be studied from excavation reports from Lefkandi, Athens and Delphi; Miletos, Sardes and Gordion; Al Mina and Tyre; Samos; Cyprus; Pithekoussai and Sicily, and sites in Iberia. These finds may be compared to evidence in the Homeric epics, Hittite treaties and letters, Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, treaties and annals, evidence from the Old Testament, the *Amarna Letters* and *The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia*. Further evidence to relations between Greeks and Near Eastern cultures may be found in the poetry of

Archilochos and Sappho. The historians Thukydides and Herodotos give valuable information about interaction between Greeks and the Near East. These are sources to the broader political and cultural environment of the Greeks, from the Dark Age to the Archaic Age (Egypt, Crete and Rhodes are not included in this survey; the material would be too extensive to include in this thesis).

The earliest literary sources to Greek politics are the epics of Homer and Hesiod. They will be used to examine political structures of the 8th century. A special case is the *Theogony* of Hesiod, which together with its Ancient Near Eastern forerunner *Enūma Eliš* may be used as a mythological, structural account of early government in the Greek polis and Mesopotamian city-state respectively. Further, the workings of councils and assemblies in the Greek epics will be compared to the Sumerian epic *Bilgameš and Akka*. The evidence for interaction between ruler, council and assembly in early polis-society and the city-state will be studied together with evidence for assemblies and councils in the Old Testament and Akkadian sources to the workings of assemblies and councils.

For a comparison of Greek constitutions to Phoenician political and jurisdictional institutions, evidence from the *Amarna Letters* is useful, and the descriptions of political practices in *The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia*. Treaties between Assyrian kings and the Levantine coastal cities give valuable information, as do corroborative evidence from the Old Testament. The *Politics* of Aristotle and the *Histories* of Polybios are later analyses of the Punic constitution, but may also yield information on Phoenician political institutions. They are valuable for their completeness and their descriptive approach.

Evidence for the development of hoplites and their significance for the emergence of the Athenian democratic polis can be found in the epics of Homer and Hesiod, the poetry of Tyrtaios, Alkaios and Pindar, and the histories of Herodotos, Thukydides and Xenophon. Additional evidence may be gleaned from the speeches of Demosthenes, and theories on the importance of hoplites are found in the *Politics* of Aristotle.

The reforms of Solon and establishment of tyranny in Athens can be studied from the poems of Simonides and Solon, instances from the comedies of Aristophanes, scholia preserved in Athenaios, and accounts in the historians Herodotos and Thukydides. An invaluable source to Athenian politics is the *Athenaion Politeia* of Aristotle. Of further use is Aristotle's *Politics* and the *Economics*. Of some use are the *Laws* and the *Republic* of Plato, and some of his dialogues. Additional evidence comes from Plutarchos, whose biographies of Athenian statesmen give valuable information about Athenian politics.

For the reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes, the early tragedies of Aischylos are sources to the political environment of the period. The main accounts of the events are those of Herodotos and Aristotle. Plutarchos gives additional information in his biographies. Thukydides offers some circumstantial evidence. Ps.-Xenophon gives an informative account of life in democratic Athens. Isokrates is interesting for his view on the Areopagos. The Sumerian legal texts *Codex Ur-Nammu*, *Codex Lipit Ištar*, and *The Reforms of Uru'inimginak*, and the Akkadian legal text *Codex Hammurapi* give comparative evidence for social reforms, and the reformation of property and the control of city-state territory. Additional information is given in sundry smaller Mesopotamian texts, such as the Akkadian *Dialogue of Pessimism*, which is a source to civic life in Mesopotamia.

Part II

1 General introduction to part II

The following investigations into the archaeology of Greece and the Near East in the Dark Ages and early Archaic age aim at establishing the extent and scope of Greek contacts with the Near East prior to the better known colonial periods of the 7th and 6th centuries. Since the development of the polis started during the Dark Ages, it is necessary to determine the cultural environment of the Greeks in this period. In the 8th century, when literary evidence shed light on cultural developments, Greece was not isolated. There has been a tendency, however, to treat the preceding Dark Ages as one of almost total isolation: The Greeks were cut off from the wider Mediterranean environment. Vice versa, the early Greek migrations into Anatolia have been viewed as being a movement into uninhabited or culturally backward areas. This was probably not the case; the disappearance of written evidence has created an impression that there were virtually no people or cultural activity in Western Anatolia at the time, but archaeological evidence indicates the contrary.

Further, the southern Hittite secundogeniture kingdoms survived the collapse of the Hittite Empire, and the coastal cities of the Levant also thrived throughout the Dark Age: The Dark Age was not equally dark everywhere all the time. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Greeks remained in contact with the Near East throughout the Dark Ages, and this may explain several Near Eastern traits in Greek culture: The cultures of the Near East were a part of the intellectual and conceptual background for the Greek culture which took shape after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces. These chapters on archaeology and Greek foreign contacts aim at clarifying where and when the Greeks became involved with Near Eastern cultures, and if possible, to what extent.

The Greek interaction with Phoenicians is quite well attested, also from literary sources. It is likely that several of Near Eastern goods, as well as technological innovations, reached the Greeks through the Phoenicians. However, there has been a predominant view of the Phoenicians that they were mainly traders, who traversed the Mediterranean in search of profit from commerce. This view is challenged, for its monocausality, and its variance with several of the written sources. If it can be made plausible that the Phoenicians were not traders external to cultural interaction, but participants in networks of exchange of ideas as well as of technology and goods, the hypothesis of a common cultural and political development in the Mediterranean will be strengthened.

2 The Dark Age of the East Aegean: Greeks, Phrygians and Lydians*

2.1 Introduction

The Late Bronze Age ended violently in a series of catastrophes in the 13th century, which left few cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean untouched. The exact nature of these events is not known, but a lot of the manifest destruction is attributed to invaders such as the Sea Peoples and the Dorians. The consequence of the disruption was a cataclysmic breakdown of international relations, and the end of long established exchange systems. About 1200, the period termed LH IIIC; life at many Mycenaean sites seems to have gone on as usual. But a curious change in the material remains, dated about the last half of the 12th century, indicate that a lot of sites were abandoned, or that their material culture suffered a severe setback. In contrast to the fervent cultural and material exchange of the Late Bronze Age, the situation in the Aegean in the Early Iron Age is characterised by regionalism and isolation. But a common view that the Dark Age was a period of general gloom and doom must be reconsidered, facing the evidence of continuity at certain sites and the gradual reestablishment of international relations after a fairly short while. The following is an attempt to demonstrate how the presence of Greek pottery at certain Anatolian sites, combined with information from Hittite sources point to a development in the East Aegean not characterised by violent invasions, but by an economic setback causing a cultural collapse. The subsequent Dark Age saw the slow resurrection of cultures and international contacts and relations, with some newcomers, like the Phrygians, entering the scene, whereas the Lydians and Greeks were present in Anatolia already.

2.2 Dark Age Greece and Western Asia Minor

The end of the Mycenaean palaces marks the end of the Bronze Age in Greece, and introduces the time of Iron. The knowledge of Mycenaean script was forgotten with the collapse of the administrative and economic system that had made it necessary. Who or what caused the catastrophes of the 13th century is unknown, but foreign invaders are often blamed for the collapse of the Levantine cities, the Hittite empire and the Mycenaean palaces. Since Thukydides wrote about an invasion of Dorians eighty years after the Trojan War (Thuc.1.12), they have largely been held responsible for the collapse on the Greek mainland.

* Parts of this chapter were presented as a paper at the International Research Seminar between the Carsten Niebuhr Institute, Copenhagen and the Freie Universität, Berlin: "Transitional Periods and Phases in the Ancient Near East and in Ancient Egypt", in Copenhagen 30.01-02.02.2003, titled "Shifting spheres of interaction in Iron Age Anatolia". I am grateful for the comments and response of the participants and teachers at the seminar.

This is then supposed to have triggered further migrations, in which the Ionians and other Greeks fled to Anatolia and the islands in the Aegean to avoid the invaders from the North.

2.2.1 Submycenaean and a “Dorian invasion”

Developments after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces are little known, and there are several possible explanations of the archaeological evidence. The hypothesis of a Dorian invasion is now mainly discarded. The picture of a time of wanderings in the Dark Age, however, has been persistent. V. R. d’A. Desborough argues that Submycenaean culture differs from Mycenaean in every aspect except the pottery, and thus postulates a migration of foreigners (called Submycenaean), who merged into and dominated the existing Mycenaean settlements during the second half of the 12th century (Desborough 1972, 107). These newcomers, he suggests, may have come from north-west Greece (ibid. 110). Desborough defends the thesis of the arrival of newcomers by referring to the oral tradition of invasions in the Dark Age, confirmed by the later distribution of the Greek dialects Ionic, Doric and Aeolic (ibid. 111).⁸

Against this, Anthony Snodgrass argues that the remains left from the hypothesised Dorian, Boiotian and Thessalian migrations are indistinguishable from the material culture of the Mycenaean survivors (Snodgrass 1971 [2000], 312 ff), which with the reading of Linear B as Greek, would speak of a continuity in language, culture and people in Greek lands rather than a violent invasion of foreigners.

John Chadwick rejected the hypothesis of a Dorian invasion in light of linguistic as well as archaeological evidence. The decipherment of Linear B has given evidence for a Dorian dialect, whereas archaeology has brought evidence against the theory of a Dorian invasion (Chadwick 1976, 104). The problem remains; why did the language of Mycenae, Pylos and Knossos change from East to West Greek? Chadwick proposes a theory that the different Greek dialects all developed within Greece itself after the arrival of the Greeks at the end of Late Helladic (roughly 2000 BCE). He rejects the theory of waves of invaders bringing the Ionic, Doric and Aeolic dialects to Greece (ibid. 106-7). Thus, the Dorians must have been part of the Middle Helladic invasion of Greek speakers into Greece. Whereas the Mycenaean elite adopted traits from Minoan culture, such as writing and palace architecture, substantial parts of the population may have spoken a dialect which is not preserved in the Linear B of

⁸ Is it not more probable that the distribution of Greek dialects lies behind the myth of Greek wanderings than the other way round? An oral tradition spanning seven hundred years is unlikely to be accurate, whereas myths about the origins of phenomena are based on contemporary observations.

the scribal tradition.⁹ He argues that Dorians lived alongside the Mycenaean Greeks, and may have formed an underprivileged class within Mycenaean society, with their own dialect that is not preserved in written documents, but evident from later sources as a language superimposed on the language of the Linear B tablets (*ibid.* 112). The Mycenaean elite dominated a widespread middle and lower class speaking proto-Doric, people who took advantage of the disasters of the palaces to establish new communities in the Iron Age (*ibid.* 114-5).

In a summary article, William Coulson argues that Greek Dark Age developments can be better explained without the Dorians than with them. The similarities between fibulae and weapons from northern Italy and central Europe in comparison to finds from Greece might indicate exchange rather than an invasion. The hypothesis that iron technology entered the eastern Aegean from the Near East seems likelier than the thesis that Dorians introduced it from central Europe. Besides, iron is attested in Greece before the supposed Dorian invasion, making it even harder to maintain the notion of an intruding people wreaking havoc with their new technology. Also, the cremation practices that are attributed to invading Dorians are no novelty in the region. LH IIIC cremation graves are numerous, and cremation is attested in Thessaly and the Argolid as far back as the Neolithic period (Coulson 1990, 14-16). New ceramics such as the “barbarian ware” can be attributed to a new economical situation, and not necessarily to actual barbarians replacing the old population (see also Small 1990).¹⁰

2.2.2 Protogeometric pottery

Desborough wrote on the Greek Dark Ages from an Athenian perspective. Athens was the place of origin for the style of pottery known as Protogeometric in the middle of the 11th century (Desborough 1972, 133). Protogeometric pottery emerged as a distinct style after a period of development and innovation, started by contact with Cyprus and its pottery (*ibid.* 65). Further contact with Cyprus is evident from the introduction of iron-working, which was known in Cyprus since before 1150 BCE. Inhabitants of Lefkandi and Athens may have learned this from Cypriotes, and even visited Cyprus in Submycenaean times (*ibid.* 78).

⁹ Such groups may have lived in the North-West on the north shore of the Corinthian Gulf, outside Mycenaean culture proper (Chadwick 1976, 108-9). But Chadwick refutes the hypothesis of such groups abandoning their homeland and invading the Mycenaean centres, because there are no indication of depopulation in the probable areas of origin for such invasion (in the north-west) (*ibid.* 109).

¹⁰ But see Rutter 1990 for an opposing interpretation. He maintains that the pottery should be read as a foreign element, and not an internal development.

Athenian culture greatly influenced surrounding communities in pottery and metalwork (ibid. 158).

Protogeometric pottery is found also in Western Asia Minor. At Miletos, Submycenaean pottery has been found subsequent to a destruction of the site in LH IIIC. Habitation was continuous after that; the distribution of Protogeometric pottery at the site covers quite a respectable area, and the settlement was extensive in the Geometric period. The published vases and sherds have a very close similarity to the shapes and decorative motives from Athens. The Protogeometric pottery might link up with Submycenaean, and indicate continuous connections between Miletos and Athens during the later Dark Ages (Desborough 1972, 179). Sherds found at Old Smyrna of a Protogeometric type (among native monochrome ware) is not attributed to Athenian contacts, however, but may have belonged to immigrants. If there were immigrants, whence did they come, and when? Desborough dates the intrusive pottery at Smyrna to about 950 BCE, and attributes it to a very small initial group of immigrants (ibid. 183). Desborough also discusses the question of whether there were any penetration inland of the people who used Protogeometric pottery. There is no trace of an inland settlement, but there is some material from Sardis, the capital of Lydia, about fifty miles inland from Smyrna. In a deep sounding, a small quantity of late Mycenaean and Protogeometric sherds has been found, as well as a fibula hardly earlier than the 9th century. Desborough dates the Protogeometric ware to the late tenth and ninth centuries, but has no suggestions for the interpretation of the apparently very late Mycenaean type of pottery (ibid. 184).

2.2.3 Invasion or immigration?

Was there an invasion of Dorians into Greece and a subsequent Ionian migration into Western Asia Minor in the Dark Age? Can this hypothesis explain the appearance of Submycenaean and Protogeometric pottery at Miletos and Sardis? How were the relations between local Anatolians and the new settlers? Did the Greeks move into an unclaimed, empty country at the end of the Dark Age?

With reference to the statements above by Chadwick, Snodgrass and Coulson, there seems to be little reason to maintain the hypothesis of violent mass invasions. It would indeed have been astonishing if foreign invaders should have been able to wipe out the entire local Mycenaean population. The material culture of Submycenaean indicates that they were Mycenaean, in a different socio-economic situation.

If the local inhabitants in central Greece were indeed pushed out by new-comers, why is there no evidence of mass arrivals of Greeks in Western Asia Minor? The amount of Submycenaean and Protogeometric found at Miletos, Smyrna and the rest of Western Asia Minor suggests the immigration of small groups rather than a wave of refugees. At Miletos, there seems to be a continuity of settlement from Mycenaean to Protogeometric, which would mean that the Greeks were already there by the time of the Ionian migration. Economic changes may have resulted in the adaptation of new skills and strategies locally, as well as migration to new areas. These changes might have been triggered by violent events, such as increased piracy and the disruption of exchange routes between the Aegean and the Levant. If the palace economy were in any way dependent on such foreign contacts, any severance of ties to overseas locations would put the system under strain, perhaps leading to its collapse.

Greece and Anatolia in the Dark Age is something completely different from the foregoing Mycenaean and Hittite world with its imperialism, palaces and international contacts. The people remained, but the basis for the Bronze Age cultures was gone. The East Aegean world-system seems to have broken down completely. Even though a few gleams of light pierce the darkness caused by the lack of sources, it is evident that mainland Greece had suffered a severe setback. Only in few places are there continued settlements identifiable from continuity in LHIIIC through Submycenaean to Protogeometric pottery. International contacts are attested from the 10th century at Lefkandi on Euboea, showing that Greece was not that poor and isolated as the term “Dark Age” implies (Coulson 1990, 9; Morris 2000, 218-222).

Submycenaean culture extended their culture into and across the Aegean, and had contacts with Cyprus (Desborough 1972, 78). The time between 1075 and 1050 seems to be a turning point in the Dark Age, with increased activity especially for Athens, after a time of relative stagnation and isolation (ibid. 79). In the central Aegean area, Mycenaean communities may have persisted throughout the Dark Age, but gradually become weakened by the general instability around them. Desborough takes the movement of Submycenaean culture into the Aegean as an indication of the final dissolution of these communities (ibid. 82). He maintains that it is not impossible that quite a large group of people from central Greece crossed over the Aegean and settled on the coast of Asia Minor. The hypothesis of Desborough is that the failure of the Mycenaean settlements in the central Aegean around 1075 BCE resulted in new opportunities for the Submycenaean culture in mainland central Greece, profiting from their contacts with Cyprus and expanding into the Aegean. These Submycenaean culture did not come from or through the Mycenaean settlements of the Aegean (ibid. 83).

In Anatolia, the Lydians, Lykians, Karians and other indigenous peoples grew powerful in the absence of a threatening Hittite Empire, and the Hittites survived in kingdoms of southern Anatolia, the post-Hittite Luwian states of Carchemish and Tarhuntassa. The present investigation has a view from Miletos and western Anatolia: The Greeks do not seem to have been cut off from their surroundings in the Dark Age, but to have maintained contacts with settlement on the Anatolian coast and further inland. The developments in the East Aegean may be explained without the hypothesis of great numbers of invaders; as an inner economic and cultural development. There is indeed little to suggest that Western Anatolia was depopulated at the time of the appearance of Protogeometric pottery at Miletos or Sardes, and an investigation of the initial relations between Greeks and Anatolians from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age would perhaps be rewarding to better the understanding of cultural developments in the Dark Age.

2.3 Shifting spheres of interaction in Iron Age Anatolia

The image of a Dark Age of invasions in Early Iron Age Anatolia becomes modified as archaeologists find indications of continued settlement at many sites, and new insights are gained into the cultural map of the western Hittite Empire (maps in Niemeier 1998, 20; Starke 2002, 308). The Dark Age of Anatolia can be viewed as a period of transition after the collapse of the Hittite Empire, in which other peoples and powers grew in influence and importance. The process by which this happened is not clear. Cultures are involved in spheres of interaction with each other; there is a defined limit to the extension of political interference and economic and cultural exchange. In Anatolia, these spheres seem to have shifted in the course of events after the collapse of the Mycenaean and Hittite Empire, and the breakdown of the exchange cycles evident from the Amarna-correspondence. Communities were involved with the outside world in new ways, and the communities involved in this exchange changed.

The development in western Anatolia at the end of the Hittite Empire must be seen in connection with the Ahhijawas, Millawanda and the Arzawas. A consensus has recently been reached in the question of identifying these peoples and places mentioned in Hittite sources. The Ahhijawas are understood as a rendering of the Homeric term Achaeans, the historical Mycenaeans, whereas Millawanda has been plausibly identified with Ionian Miletos on the West Anatolian coast (Mountjoy 1998, Starke 2002, Niemeier 2002). The Arzawan territories

are now realised to be lying west of the Hittite Empire in the region of the later Lydian kingdom centred on Sardes (Hawkins 1998).

These new points of departure encourage a hypothesis of continued contacts between Greeks and Anatolian peoples through the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, because of the finds of Hittite, Mycenaean and later Greek pottery at Miletos, Sardes and Gordion. Of special importance for a hypothesis of continued contacts are finds of Protogeometric pottery at Miletos and Sardes, since Greece and Anatolia are thought to have been fairly isolated in the 11th century. The continuous sequence from earlier Greek pottery to Protogeometric probably indicates continued contacts between the Greek mainland and Anatolia.

The presence of Mycenaean Greeks and their contacts with the Arzawas in the Late Bronze Age known from Hittite texts may be read in connection with the spread of Greek culture in the Ionian region and beyond in the Iron Age. This is relevant for the problem of the arrival and development of the Phrygians and the early history of the Lydians, and the relationship of both these cultures with the Greeks. A synthetic analysis of foreign influences and indigenous developments will hopefully shed some light on the Aegean and Anatolian Dark Age, and explain the situation known from later written sources concerning the relationship between Greeks and Anatolians.

The latest excavations at Miletos, Sardes and Gordion, the Hittite sources concerning the Ahhijawas, the Karabel A inscription and the works of Thukydides and Herodotos give clues to the developments from the Late Bronze Age (LBA) to the Early Iron Age (EIA). I start with a presentation of relevant results from the mentioned excavations, followed by the information from the written sources, and finally a presentation of some theories to explain the developments, investigating the dynamics of cultural interaction as shifts in the spheres of interaction.

2.4 Archaeological evidence

The following is a survey of archaeological sites which are important for the investigation of continuity of Greek presence in Anatolia in the Dark Age, and their interaction with indigenous peoples like Lydians and Phrygians. Ephesos and Smyrna are not included, since no Greek finds preceding the 9th century are reported from these sites.

2.4.1 Miletos

Miletos, ancient Millawanda, is a well known site on the Anatolian West coast, which was settled by Greeks from Mycenaean times through to the Roman Era. In 1994-95, Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier excavated Miletos at the Temple of Athena and Stadion Hill, aiming to make a long profile encompassing all the periods from the oldest, historic Miletos through to the Protogeometric and Geometric period.

Finds at the site reveal early Minoan interests in the settlement, and this pottery was soon found together with Mycenaean wares (ill. in Niemeier 1998, 33). The point, at which Minoan influence started in Miletos, is still undetermined (Niemeier 1997, 242). From the earlier excavations in the sixties it was impossible to discern the process by which Miletos became Mycenaean rather than Minoan in culture, and this problem is still not solved. Greek finds did not outnumber the Anatolian pottery at any time during the Late Helladic (LH) phase (Mee 1978, 135).

A fire destroyed the settlement in LH IIIA2 (ca. 1360-1300) (Second Building period), and a huge wall and fortification was built in the next period (Third Building period), dated to LH IIIB (ca. 1320/1300-1200/1190). This fortification shows similarities with Hittite casemate-systems. A LH IIIB2-IIIC krater fragment probably shows a Hittite horned crown (ill. in Niemeier 1998, 39).

Among the Mycenaean wares of the second and third Building period (LH IIIB1-LHIIIC, i.e. ca. 1320/1300-1100/1090) there were quantities of local work and regional imports, something which sparked a debate on whether the term Mycenaean for LBA Miletos was justified at all (Niemeier 1997, 197-98). A basically Karian settlement gradually influenced by Aegean settlers and seafarers does not seem unlikely (Melas 1988, 114). At the time of the Mycenaean language was Luwian, and the locals obviously had their own, independent culture (ibid. 242). Then again, the presence of Mycenaean at the site is undeniable, both from ceramics and from finds of religious figurines, the *fi* and *psi* figures.

As to the end of LBA Miletos and the following phases of settlement, there is evidence of thorough destruction in LH IIIC. The oldest pottery after the destruction is possibly Submycenaean. There are Protogeometric finds supposedly originating from Attica. From the 10th century, Miletos continued to be an important Ionian site, and became a capital for Archaic and Classical Greek culture.

2.4.2 Sardes

Sardis represents an interesting case, since it shows late Mycenaean pottery in a context far away from the coast in a period after the fall of the mainland palaces. Especially G. M. A. Hanfmann, G. F. Swift, and Andrew Ramage have excavated the site in the period between 1960 and 1970. The current excavator is Crawford M. Greenewalt Jr.

The site shows two destruction layers, one dated to about 1200 and one to about 700, corresponding to known periods of turbulence in the region. The settlement starts from humble beginnings in the Bronze Age to become an important centre in the middle and late Iron Age, as capital of the Lydian kingdom.

The most intriguing finds are some Mycenaean, Submycenaean and Protogeometric wares dated to the 12th and 11th centuries, found in the “Lydian Trench ” area, where deep soundings were made, and the city area (ill. in Ramage 1994, 169). Hittite pottery was also found, out of context, but certainly belonging to some Bronze Age level. This means that there is a phase with Hittite and local pottery followed by a period of imports from the coastal Aegean sites, probably Miletos or some other Mycenaean centre. The Greek pottery continues with some Protogeometric finds datable to about early 10th century, and examples of local imitation, which indicates the prestige attributed to this foreign style (ill.s in Ramage 1994, 168; Hanfmann 1967, 26). The Protogeometric and Geometric layers follow on each other. The Geometric finds are found together with Lydian imitations, dated to the eight and possibly ninth century (Hanfmann 1967, 34). Underneath these layers is a thick layer of clay, which contained over two hundred sherds of Protogeometric and Late Mycenaean pottery (ibid. 34-6) (ill. in Hanfmann 1967, 27). The continuity of Greek wares from Mycenaean times to Geometric and up to the Roman Era is evident, both from imported wares, and from a tradition of local imitations.

2.4.3 Gordion

T. Cuyler Young in the seventies, and Mary M. Voigt and Robert C. Henrickson in the eighties, have excavated Gordion, capital of the Phrygian Empire, in several campaigns. The latest results come from the Yassihöyük Stratigraphic Sequence, a deep sounding which should give a good view of the cultural developments throughout the Bronze and Iron Age.

Gordion was a Hittite Empire site in the LBA, but the tradition of wheel made, mass produced pottery was replaced by dark burnished, handmade pottery in the EIA (ill.s in Henrickson 1994, 122-5). There is no gap between the two traditions, but no local antecedent to the Early Iron Age Handmade (EIAH) pottery in the LBA either (Henrickson 1994, 107). There are similarities between this ware and Balkan types, and finds from Troy VIIb (ibid.107-108) (ill. in Henrickson and Voigt 1995, 98). Also, a change in architecture is evident from the YHSS Phase 8 (LBA) to 7B (EIA). A date is given to 1100-1000 BCE (Voigt 1994, 267-78) (ill. in Henrickson and Voigt 1995, 83). A phase of semi-subterranean wattle-and-daub buildings and EIAH pottery together with a buff ware continues to a period of building activities in stone (Voigt 1994, 270).

A formal building plan on the City Mound related to the Phrygian elite quarters starts in phase 6B, with a series of courtyards and megarons (Voigt 1994, 270-72) (ill. in Voigt 1994, 283). A citadel was under construction, but destroyed in a conflagration, the 6A early Phrygian destruction level dated ca. 700 (Voigt 1994, 272). From the courtyards of this level were found orthostats showing similarities with southern post-Hittite art from Carchemish and Zincirli.

The burned citadel was immediately rebuilt, and starts the phase 5, the middle Phrygian period (Voigt 1994, 273) (ill. in Voigt 1994, 286). Greek influence is attestable from YHSS 5 (Henrickson 1994, 112). Finds from tumuli are now adjusted upwards, and are not dateable before the 7th century (ibid.112). Among the pieces in question are some Late Geometric Corinthian sherds (ill. in De Vries 1990, 390). One tumulus, the MM, is associated with king Midas, and the finds include inlaid woodwork showing geometric patterns, cauldrons, and ladles and drinking cups (DeVries 1975; 1990, 389-91) (ill. in De Vries 1988, 45).

2.5 Written evidence

Information from Hittite written evidence will hopefully clarify the situation behind the finds of Mycenaean pottery from the Late Bronze Age in Arzawan territory, parts of which later belonged to the Lydian kingdom. Further, the evidence from Herodotos and Thukydidides provide information about the interaction of Greeks with the indigenous peoples of Anatolia. This may explain the apparent continuity in interaction between Greeks and Anatolians in the Iron Age.

2.5.1 Hittite sources

The readings of the inscription of Tudhaliya IV from Yalburt, and the Bronze Tablet of the same king has made clear the political geography of LBA Anatolia, placing the post-Hittite kingdom of Tarhuntassa to the south of Anatolia in Cilicia and the Lukka lands to the southwest, in later Lykia. Other inscriptions and bullae have demonstrated the continuity of Hittite settlements in southern Anatolia and Syria, including Carchemish, making the picture of this region fairly clear (Hawkins 1994, 91-93) (map in Hawkins 1998, 31).

The western geography was rather nebulous until a new reading of the Karabel A relief, which is situated in a pass crossing the Tmolos range inland from Izmir, by J.D. Hawkins in 1997. He determined that the person on the relief was Tarkasnawa, king of Mira, thus placing the kingdoms of Arzawa, Wilusa, the Seha River Land and Mira in areas later known as the Troad, Lydia and Ionia. Mira probably represents the last gasp of the Arzawan kingdom, which was dissolved by Mursili II. Its capital was Abasa, the later Ephesos, on the west coast (Hawkins 1994, 1998). This is relevant to the present discussion, because a number of Hittite texts mention alliances between the Arzawas and the Ahhijawas, which are now plausibly identified with the Achaean Greeks (ill. in Hawkins 1998, 3).

A text from the reign of Mursili II, LH IIIA2 in Mycenaean terms, mention that the Arzawas to the west of the Hittites, the Ahhijawas and Millawanda had joined forces against the Hittites. This led to a punitive expedition, which might explain the burned layer at Miletos, mentioned earlier, from LH IIIA2. In the same year, Arzawa was attacked and dissolved, and Abasa-Ephesos taken (Mountjoy 1998, 47). The king of Arzawa, Uhhazidi, fled to safety in Ahhijawa-controlled areas, and his kingdom was split into smaller parts, the kingdoms Mira and Haballa. The Hittites controlled the new kings Mashuiluwa and Tarkasnalli. But nothing is certain about the further fate of Millawanda. It seems to have escaped annexation, and again joined the Ahhijawas (Niemeier 2002, 296). Miletos was difficult to control directly from the east, because of the terrain (Mountjoy 1998, 47).

A further important text is the Tawagalawa-letter, again mentioning Millawanda in connection with the Ahhijawas and Arzawas. Millawanda was in the Hittite scope, because of an exiled Arzawan prince, Pijamaradus, probably the grandson of Uhhazidi, who plagued the coast of Anatolia. As the Ahhijawan royal representative in Millawanda was a son-in-law to Pijamaradus, the prince could use Millawanda as base for his operations. In the letter, the Hittite king Hattusili III (1265-1240) asks of the Ahhijawas to suggest to Pijamaradus that he should enter negotiations with the Hittites. How this story went further is not known. Tawagalawa can be read as the Greek Eteokles, and was a brother of the Ahhijawan king

(Niemeier 2002, 297). The letter is dated to LH IIIB in Mycenaean terms (Mountjoy 1998, 48).

Millawanda is mentioned one more time, in the Milawada letter from Tudhalija III (1240-1214), where the borders of Millawanda are discussed. Unfortunately, the addressee is unknown, which makes it uncertain who actually ruled Millawanda at the time. If it were sent to the king of Ahhijawa, it would mean that power over Millawanda had gone into the hands of the Hittites. Niemeier sees this thesis strengthened by finds in Millawanda itself of Hittite objects. After this period, Ahhijawa probably lost its status as a Great Kingdom, since it is no longer on the list of such in a treaty between Tudhalija III and Sauskamuwa of Amurru (North Syria) (Niemeier 2002, 298).

Mountjoy, citing Hawkins, would rather have the Milawada-letter addressed to Tarkasnawa, king of Mira, which would indicate the continued importance of this western Kingdom, and that Millawanda remained under Ahhijawan control in the reign of Tudhaliya IV (Mountjoy 1998, 48).

Some decennia later, though, the empires of both Ahijawas and Hittites collapsed, after a period of trouble and destabilisation which cause is not exactly known.

2.5.2 The evidence from Thukydides

Thukydides relates the ancient history of the Greeks and their neighbours in the first book of the Peloponnesian War. He tells of a time of contacts between Greeks and the peoples of Asia Minor dominated by piracy, where cities were more like unfortified villages frequently harassed by powerful sea raiders. This period ended with the thalassocracy of Minos (Thuc.1.4-5). As a consequence of piracy and unrest, elder cities were built further inland. The younger cities on the coast were fortified and grew rich from sea borne trade (Thuc.1.7). Agamemnon had a mightier fleet of ships than his contemporaries, and could therefore persuade the rest of the Greeks to join him in the campaign against Troy (Thuc.1.9).

This is all he says about the history of the Eastern Mediterranean in the Bronze Age. Interestingly, Thucydides emphasises the role of the sea powers, and the most important source of wealth is trade and piracy. But there is no mention of a Dark Age or breach in history after the Trojan War. The picture is one of unrest throughout the whole ancient period, making progress and political unity difficult. He describes the time after the Trojan War as one of migrations and internal strife, which resulted in the Dorians and Heraklids conquering Peloponnesos in the eightieth year after the war, which would give a date at 1120. Thucydides

tells of the Ionian migrations that they came about after Attica was overpopulated by refugees from civil unrest in other parts of Greece (Thuc.1.2). He emphasises the importance of sea borne trade as a power base for the emerging Greek poleis. But warfare on land was concentrated against one's neighbours, and did not result in any consolidation of power (Thuc.1.15).

2.5.3 The evidence from Herodotos

Herodotus gives a wealth of stories about the Anatolian peoples encountered by the Ionians, especially about king Kroisos and the Lydians. The earliest information about Anatolian matters is a mention of the Phrygian king Midas (Hdt. 1.14), and an account of the Greek cities in Asia (Hdt. 1.141-151). The Lydian kings go back no further than the 7th century with Gyges (Hdt. 1.12). Before him the kings are semi-legendary, and the information difficult to assess.

The Heraklid dynasty is described as follows: Alkaios, son of Herakles and a slave girl belonging to Iardanos, was the first Heraklid. His son was Belos, Belos son was Ninos, and Ninos son was Agron, the first Heraklid to rule Sardes. The last Heraklid was Kandaules son of Myrsos, which the Greeks called Myrsilos. All in all, the Heraklids ruled twenty-two generations, 505 years. Before Agron, the descendants of Lydon son of Atys ruled Sardes. From Lydon the people are called the Lydians, but before him they were called Maionians. They surrendered the rule to the Heraklids after a prophecy (*ek theopropiou*) (Hdt. 1.7). If we add 505 years to the start of the reign of Gyges, which lasted from 687-652, this would give a date of about 1190 for the Heraklids in Lydia.

It is evident that the Greeks thought the Lydians were a very ancient, indigenous people in Anatolia, which for some mysterious reason was ruled by a dynasty with a semi-divine pedigree. Any further conclusions from this information would be risky, although the Heraklids are usually associated with the Dorians.

The Lydians were the first to have minted gold and silver; they were the first hucksters and the inventors of all kinds of games, except draughts. The games were invented in the reign of Atys, son of Manes, as a remedy for hunger. The famine pushed half the population into emigration, however, led by Tyrsenos son of Atys, and they went to live in Italy, where they named themselves the Tyrsenians (Hdt.1.94).

2.6 Discussion

From the architecture of houses, undecorated everyday ceramics, chamber tombs and cultic figurines, a zone of Mycenaean occupation has been defined for the 14th–13th century in the Southeast Aegean. This zone encompassed the island of Samos in the North, to the island of Rhodes in the South, and the Southwest coast of Anatolia between Miletos in the North to Halikarnassos in the South (Niemeier 2002, 295). Penelope Mountjoy (1998) has termed this an East Aegean *koine* or Interface in the LHIIIC period, which would speak for a range of contact points between the Ahhijawas and the Arzawas. These trade routes roughly equal the later Ionian world, and also open the way to the Levant through ports at Rhodes. Trade not only convey wares and skills, but also myth and stories. Perhaps this early network of contacts can explain the many Near Eastern traits in Greek literature that must have become part of Greek culture at a formative stage to become such a key element. The similarities between Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Hittite story of *Kumarbi* and the Mesopotamian creation epic *Enūma Eliš* are well known (West 1997, 276-283). There have been attempts at establishing a direct link between Hittite myths and Greek epic through Phrygian intermediaries, but these have been refuted by Martin L. West (West 1966 [1997], 28-9).

Walter Burkert has brought attention to the many similarities between Greek and Near Eastern religion. The seer Mopsos, mentioned in the Hesiodic *Melampodia*, is a link between Greece and the Near East, his name being found in Cilician inscriptions as Moksos. The Greeks shared a wide range of divinatory practices with the Hittites and Mesopotamians, such as hepatoscopy, bird augury and lecanomancy (Burkert 1995, 52-3). There are also parallels in the pantheon, such as the connection between gods of healing and dogs, found with both Asklepios and the Mesopotamian goddess Gula (ibid. 75-9). Burkert explains the many parallels between Greek and Near Eastern cultures as the result of Greece being part of a cultural continuum in the 8th century Mediterranean. Greeks were engaged in extensive cultural exchange with the high cultures of the Near East (ibid. 128). Burkert considers the peculiar Greek cultural development to be caused by them being the most easterly of the Westerners (ibid. 129).

From the archaeological evidence from Miletos and Sardes, links between Greeks and Anatolia seem to have been continuous throughout the Dark Age. Greece may therefore have been part of a Near Eastern cultural continuum as early as the 11th century. Wolfgang Röllig argues that Near Eastern influences on Greek culture took place between the 10th and the 7th century, and that at least parts of this transmission took place via Anatolia (Röllig 1992, 96-8).

The final placement of Millawanda, Wilusa, and the Ahhijawas by the new reading of the Karabel A inscription surely brightens the perspectives of understanding the complex development of Anatolia in the Dark Age. New evidence from Thebes makes it plausible that Miletos was the bridge head in Anatolia for the Ahhijawa, or Achaeans, whose country lay in Boiotia on the Greek mainland (Niemeier 2002, 295). Thebes is the scene of many of the tragic narratives of the ancient past, such as the siege of the *Seven against Thebes* or the story of Oedipous, indicating its importance for early Greek culture. Extensive Mycenaean ruins have been unearthed in not too recent years.

Concerning the migrating Ionians, a moderate theory of migrations is hinted at by Mervyn Popham, who is open to the possibility of an Ionian Migration actually being a slow trickle of Greek immigrants to already established Mycenaean sites surviving the cataclysm of the time around 1200. This would place the start of such migrations already in LBA. He argues that too few people lived in Greece in EIA to organise or even man a migration of the kind supposed in literary sources such as Herodotos or Thukydides (Popham 1994, 11-12).

The Lydians, who occupied parts of the former Arzawan lands, seem to have spoken a language more directly related to the Hittite than the Luwian sub-branch of their common language group. This may mean that newcomers seized power from the weakened Arzawas, and established a new rule (Macqueen 1986, 159). There is little, however, in the archaeological record to suggest such a break. The Lydians belong to the group of Luwian-Hittite indigenous population of Anatolia.

The early contacts between the Ahhijawa-Achaeans and the Arzawas show how integrated the Milesians were in the struggle for power on the Hittite western flank. It is interesting that the finds of Mycenaean pottery at Sardes is not contemporary with Hittite finds. Cline has suggested a Hittite embargo on Ahhijawa wares to explain the paucity of LH III finds in Central Anatolia (Cline 1994, 71). Snodgrass noted the finds of Greek pottery in coastal and inland Anatolia, and took the finds at Sardes as indication of an early strong Greek hold on the western coastline of Asia Minor (Snodgrass 1971, 332).

The 7th century Archaic poet Archilochos mentions the Lydian king Gyges, saying: “I don’t care for the stuff of the gold-rich Gyges (*ta Gygeō tou polychrysou*), nor does ambition pull me, nor fill me with zeal the doings of gods, nor do I love the greatness of tyranny: Far from my eyes they are” (West 19). Evidence from Sappho indicates contact with, or knowledge of, Sardes and Lydia on 7th century Lesbos (Högemann 2001, 60). Lydia was a source of inspiration for elite lifestyle on Lesbos. The habit of lying down at the table listening to songs of luxury, war and women connected the elite to the heroes of the past and

the mighty kings of the East (Morris 1996, 33).¹¹ This demonstrates that the Greeks maintained close contact with Lydian culture, and that Lydian customs continued to have a firm grip on Greek imagination, even though the Lydians in their turn imitated several elements of Greek culture.

As for the Phrygians, a moderate theory of migration is offered by G. Kenneth Sams, saying that even though a new material culture is evident at Gordion from the end of the Hittite period, it is unlikely that the local inhabitants should disappear altogether (Sams 1992, 56ff). The handmade burnished pottery (EIAH), or barbarian ware, in Gordion and elsewhere can be attributed to local manufacturers (Small 1990). When exactly Gordion turned Phrygian is hard to establish, but at least from the 11th century, building programs and elite quarters at the city mound speak of growing importance of the site and its inhabitants. Everything speaks for a kingdom of great expanse and influence from at least the 8th century, if not earlier. Mita of Muški is mentioned in a letter of Sargon II of Assyria in the late 8th century, being identified as Midas of Phrygia (Summers 1994, 245).

From the 7th century at least, Greek finds from burial mounds at Gordion give a clue to contacts between Phrygians and Greeks. Finds of drinking vessels and cauldrons in tomb contexts hints to an aristocratic, sympotic culture (DeVries 1975), which show similarities with Homeric society. This also goes for the megaron houses and court plans, although societal structure is hard to read from architecture alone. The archaeology of Iron Age Gordion seems to fit the heroic society of Homer.

2.7 Conclusion

The early finds of Greek ceramics from Sardis makes it probable that the Greeks and Lydians continued the contacts between the Seha River Land, Mira and the Ahhijawas, but known under new ethnic designations. The direction of exchange was reoriented towards the west, whereas the Phrygians dominated the eastern developments.

Dismissing the Dorian invasion altogether, the Ionian migrations can be explained as a steady flow of settlers to sites in Anatolia already established, and was certainly not a wave of invading colonists. This theory is based on the assumption that Millawanda is indeed Miletos, the Ahhijawas being the Mycenaeans and the Mycenaeans and Linear B being Greek. The continuity of Mycenaean pottery into Protogeometric in Anatolia speaks for a continued

¹¹ Sappho often sings of Lydian luxury: Sappho frs. 16.17-20; 39; 96.6-9; 98a.10-11; 132.3 (cf. Morris 1996, 33; 46 note 65).

settlement of Greeks from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, precisely at those sites that were later significant in the shaping of the polis and Greek culture in general.

Imitations of a pottery style, as found at Miletos and Sardis from Mycenaean originals is a strong argument for cultural interaction, since it takes some time for people to learn from each other, which means they will have to stay together for quite a while. The composite population of most Anatolian sites and known bilingualism of its inhabitants made such exchange possible, even inevitable.

These long standing connections between Greeks and Anatolian peoples make the frequent similarities of Greek and Hittite myths more understandable. Also, both from the Phrygian, Lydian and Greek side the developments of pottery and glyptic art show remarkable similarities. It is time to consider not only the Anatolians as contributors to Greek culture, but to analyse Greek culture as a part of the Near Eastern developments in arts, literature and perhaps even politics.

3 The early Greek colonial movement, the Levant and the Phoenicians

3.1 Introduction

From the Dark Age and into Geometric times, there is increasing archaeological evidence for Greek contacts with the Near East. The Greeks were not isolated. The firmest evidence for early Levantine and Greek contacts comes from Cyprus and Euboia, and from the Levant itself. The chronological period discussed here is ca. 1050-700 BCE, the bulk of evidence dating to 900 BCE onwards. Greek pottery found at Al Mina and Tell Sukas indicate Greek trading activities in the Levant. Oriental imports in Greek graves on Euboia and in Attica are taken as evidence of Levantine traders visiting Greece. Contacts between Greece and the Near East in the Iron Age are commonly attributed to the Phoenicians and the Euboians.

Excavations at Phoenician trading posts and settlements abroad frequently yield Cypriote and Greek pottery together with Phoenician finds. The Phoenician metropoleis Byblos, Tyre, Sidon and Sarepta have all yielded copious amounts of Mycenaean and Cypriote imports in the Late Bronze Age. Finds of Greek pottery continue in the Iron Age. Excavations at Euboian settlements abroad, such as Pithekoussai on Ischia, off the south-west coast of Italy, as well as at Lefkandi on Euboia itself, have yielded imports from the Levant together with Greek pottery. Cultural boundaries were transcended in this period, and exchange of goods and knowledge took place between peoples all around the Mediterranean. The most obvious evidence for such cultural exchange is the Greek adoption of the Phoenician script in the 9th and 8th century.

North Syria is regarded as the hub of the artistic development known as the Orientalising period, beginning at the end of the 8th century and continuing into the 7th century. This development has been excellently analysed by Walter Burkert 1992 [1995], and there seems little reason to attempt to cover that ground again in this thesis. The *Orientalizing Revolution* demonstrates the Greek debt to the Near East in literature, religion and the arts. This thesis aims at examining Near Eastern political traits in the development of Athenian democracy, and there is reason to believe that these influences found their way into Greek political culture already from the 8th century, before the Orientalising period proper. Therefore, the establishment of routes of transmission for these elements will be discussed, rather than developments in Greek art, literature or mythology as such.

The beginning of Orientalising traits in Greek art is contemporary with the Phoenician expansion and Greek colonisation. It is difficult to attribute the development with certainty to

the one or the other of the Greeks or the Phoenicians. Connections between Euboia, Cyprus, North Syria and Phoenicia were established from the 9th century (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 143-5).

These contacts are commonly attributed to trade in raw-materials, especially trade in slaves and metals from Greece and Spain against luxuries brought on Phoenician ships (cf. Sherratt and Sherratt 1993). Contact between local elites may have prompted the exchange of luxury goods, and piety as well as profit may have inspired foreign visits to international sanctuaries (cf. Boardman 1990). A number of foreign votives have been found at Greek temples, especially at the Samian Heraion (cf. Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985).

3.2 The situation in Greece

There is general agreement that mainland Greece in the Dark Age was thinly populated, lacked urban centres and was characterised by regionalisation. Contacts with the outside world never ceased, however, and imported goods are found in graves throughout the Dark Age. Archaeology is the only source to this period, since writing was unknown or little used until the 8th century. Communities like Athens survived throughout the Dark Age, but there were few inhabitants, and no urban centre. The important artistic development of the time was Protogeometric pottery, a style developed in Athens around 1050 BCE, which soon spread to other communities.

At Athens, cremation burial became universal in the 11th century. Cemeteries were smaller than in Submycenaean times; they had small plots of three to four graves over two generations (Osborne 1996, 47). By the year 1000, the Iron Age had come to the Greek mainland. Iron technology probably came from Cyprus, but as soon as the technology had been acquired, dependence upon Cyprus was short-lived (ibid. 27).

Around 900, there is a change in Athenian pottery, both in shape and decoration: Rectilinear motifs take over exclusively, featured in small panels between handles and narrow strips on the body and neck. During the 9th century, the complexity of the decoration increases: Geometric decoration spreads to more of the pot, and animal figures are introduced. In burials, there is an increase in the wealth of grave goods, which include imports from the Near East (Osborne 1996, 47-8).

In the 8th century, population increased. Larger, central temples were erected. Panhellenic cultic festivals were introduced. The pottery was Geometric. In Athens, there was a new funerary ritual of primary creation and offering trenches, in opposition to the ritual of lying-in-state which is figured on Attic vases.

3.2.1 Rise of the polis

Anthony M. Snodgrass (1980) states that since settlements were small and few there was no city-life in 9th century Greece (Snodgrass 1980, 18). 9th century Greece not only lacked sizeable towns; there was no writing, no colonisation outside the Aegean and virtually no temples. All this changed in the 8th century; there was a population explosion, in contrast to the under-population of the Dark Age (ibid. 19-20). Settlements increased in number, and communication between them became more frequent. At the same time, they became larger, and the growth of the community demanded a tighter and more complex social organisation. This resulted in the two main forms of state in Greece; the *polis* and the *ethnos* (ibid. 24-5). Snodgrass argues that the polis contrasts with anything known from the Mycenaean world, and suggests that the Greeks may have taken ideas about political organisation from the Near East. The Greeks were in contact with the older civilizations of the Near East in the 8th century. Greek society was recovering from a profound economic, social and demographic recession, and may have been eager to learn from the urban societies of the Phoenician coast-land, which had progressed further. Snodgrass argues that the Phoenician city-state was a potential model for the Greek polis (ibid. 31-2).¹²

The polis was a religious association, and a patron deity presided over each state. The rise of central city sanctuaries is a criterion for the emergence of the polis, and this took place in the 8th century (Snodgrass 1980, 33). Snodgrass places the rise of the polis in the 8th century, but maintains that this is compatible with the idea that the Phoenician model could have had some influence on it (ibid. 34).

Ian Morris (1987) analyses the rise of the polis as an indigenous Greek development. He argues that graves at Athens reveal changes in attitudes towards citizenship and egalitarianism: A larger proportion of the population receive formal burial, whereas wealthy graves disappear. This change took place in Middle and Late Geometric, the 8th and 7th century. The same indications are also found at other sites, such as Argos and Corinth (Morris 1987, 183-5). Further, 7th century decline in grave goods is set in connection with an increase in dedications at sanctuaries. The sanctuaries are interpreted as a focus for the polis in Archaic

¹² There is evidence of urbanisation at Old Smyrna from the 9th century, with a fortification-wall surrounding the settlement from about 850 BCE onwards. These may be signs of the rise of the polis in Asia Minor in the 9th century. This process had as yet no counterpart in Athens or Corinth (Snodgrass 1980, 32). However, as these fortifications may have been defensive measures rather than signs of urbanisation, Snodgrass emphasises changes in religion as criteria for the advent of the polis.

times (ibid. 190). The Panhellenic sanctuaries at Olympia, Delphi, Delos and Dodona began to flourish in the 8th century (ibid. 192).

Morris' thesis is that these changes in burial reflect the rise of the polis, as an identification of the polity with its inhabitants. Whereas formal burial had been a privilege of the *agathoi*, the elite, from the Early Dark Age to the middle of the 8th century, a major change occurred in the structure of burial practices around 750 BCE. This change was related to other simultaneous changes in concepts of space, the gods and pollution. The change in funerary practices corresponds to the invention of the idea of the polis. The appearance of citizenship and the development of institutionalised chattel-slavery were the dominant social relationships. According to Morris, the polis idea was overturned at Athens around 700 BCE, and was replaced by a structure similar to that of the Dark Age, where only the *agathoi*, and not the *kakoi*, were given formal burial. There was a shift toward the polis ideal again, however, which was recognised in the Kleisthenic reforms (Morris 1987, 216).

There are some difficulties in determining formal archaeological criteria for urbanisation. Snodgrass looks for architectural changes such as the building of city-walls to argue for a development towards the polis. Morris depends on statistical analyses of graves and their contents for his hypothesis of political changes in Athens. Both approaches lead to a dating for the development of the polis in the 8th century. It is difficult to determine what caused this. Population increase may have been a contributing factor for urbanisation. Increased contact with urban communities of the outside world may have encouraged the development of the polis at this stage. The archaeological evidence must at any rate be interpreted; it does not speak for itself. Morris' interpretation of the material is confirmed by information from later, written sources, but there is a danger in exactly such confirmation, as it may lead to a projection of later developments into the past.

3.2.2 Early Greek colonies east and west

There was a continuity of Greek sites overseas from Mycenaean to Protogeometric and Geometric times in East Greece (Boardman 1980, 25). Some new settlements are attributed to migrations: The Aeolian migrations in the northern half of the coastline of Asia Minor; then the Ionian in the south, on the coast of the East Aegean. Migration took place on many occasions, from the 11th to the 9th centuries. Boardman argues that the Greeks followed the routes of their Mycenaean predecessors (ibid. 26).

There were also new establishments. These were different from sites like Miletos, where Greek settlement seems to have been continuous through the Submycenaean and

Protogeometric periods. From the 10th century onwards, there is evidence for Greek exchange of goods in the East, at Al Mina in Syria. In the 8th century, Greek activities in the West are evident from Pithekoussai on Ischia, off Naples. In the 8th to the 6th centuries, several Greek poleis sent colonists to form new communities abroad; in Sicily and South Italy and further west, as well as in the Black Sea region. These were *emporía* or *apoikiai*, Greek settlements or colonies for exchange with foreigners and for agriculture. Al Mina and Pithekoussai are often treated separately from these later colonies, but they will be treated here as early colonies, rather than isolated cases of settlement abroad. Since the polis took shape in Greece in the 8th century, possible sources of foreign influences on political developments must be sought from the same period. The later Greek colonies will therefore not be discussed in this thesis.

In the East, Greeks were active before the period of colonisation. At Al Mina, the Greeks are attested from the 10th century and throughout the colonisation period. Boardman divides the time span in question into three:

1. Pre-Al Mina, down to the mid 9th century, i.e. Middle Geometric in Attic pottery. In this period, Phoenicians are thought to have had priority in trade.
2. The Middle Geometric to early Late Geometric; the first major arrivals of Greek pottery in the Levant took place in this period, before any colonising of the west by Greeks or others; Orientalia in the west are as yet not equivocally attested. Immigrant goldsmiths are attested from Euboa, Attica and Crete, and their origin may be North Syrian. At this time, the Greeks probably started adopting the alphabet.
3. Late Geometric; the period of colonisation; this is when the flux of orientalia westwards is most influential. Phoenician and Egyptian products are found virtually in all parts of the Mediterranean. North Syrian products (ivories, lyre player seals) and metalwork from North Syria, Assyria and Urartu are distributed throughout the Greek world and further west (Boardman 1990, 177-80).

The first Greek colony in the West was Pithekoussai, founded in the 8th century by Euboians from Eretria and Chalcis. Pottery from the 8th century has been found on the acropolis. The cemetery of Valle San Montano has been fully excavated, and its earliest pottery has been dated to about 770 BCE. Corinthian and Euboian pottery predominates. A Rhodian cup has been found in one of the early graves, and is inscribed with a paraphrase over the cup of

Nestor, as described by Homer. The cemetery's main phase was over soon after 700, but was in use into the 6th century (Boardman 1980, 165-6).

In Greece, competition for land in the newly-arising polis was intense, as it was the only qualification for citizenship. This was a push-factor for the colonisation-movement, and from about 735 BCE, groups set out for the West. Snodgrass argues that this was different than the establishment of Pithekoussai in the second quarter of the 8th century, since there was probably little population-pressure at the time. Snodgrass asserts that a commercial motive probably lay behind it, especially a desire for the mineral wealth of Etruria (Snodgrass 1980, 40-1).

Boardman also argues that the Greeks established colonies not only for agriculture, but for exchange. Euboians from Eretria and Chalcis were searching for metals abroad (Boardman 1980, 162). Morris points out that the western colonies, such as Pithekoussai, seem to have adopted a polis pattern of cemetery organisation immediately. The pattern is similar to Attic Late Geometric cemeteries (Morris 1987, 188).

Thukydides claims that Greek colonists supplanted Phoenicians who had settled on Sicily (Thuc. 6.2.6). Archaeology does not support this; there is no evidence in Sicily for Phoenician settlements which antedates the arrival of the Greeks. The Greek arrival in the region of southern Italy and Sicily is first attested from some Protogeometric pottery in the Tarentine region. From the early 8th century, there are Aegean products at western sites; Greek cups from Middle Geometric II (800-750 BCE) are found at Veii in Etruria and other parts of southern Italy, and in Sicily at Villasmunde between Leontini and Megara Hyblaia. It is impossible to tell who carried these goods; probably both Phoenicians and Greeks. The beginning of Greek colonisation on Sicily is dated from material belonging to Late Geometric I (ca. 750-725) (Graham 1982, 95). The first Greek colony in Sicily was Naxos, founded from Euboia in 734 (Thuc. 6.3.1). The colony and its date is confirmed by finds of houses and pottery both imported and locally produced, from LG I. Leontini is also dated to LG I. The year after the founding of Naxos, Syracuse was founded by the Corinthians (Thuc. 6.3.2). An 8th century settlement has been excavated (Graham 1982, 103-5).

Concerning Greek settlements in Spain, there is little evidence for Archaic Greek settlement until the 6th century, although Greek pottery often show up in Phoenician sites. The oldest evidence for Greek activities in Iberia is Herodotos' tale of Phokaians at Tartessos (Hdt. 1.163), supposedly in the 7th century, but this is not confirmed by archaeology.

3.3 An archaeology of interaction

Evidence for Greek activities abroad dates to as early as the 11th century, from Protogeometric times. Greeks exchanged goods with the Near East from the 10th century. Evidence for this has come from Cyprus, Euboia and the Levant. These connections between Greece and the Near East in the Dark Age indicate that Greek cultural developments were exposed to the more advanced cultures of Syria and the Levant. This physical contact facilitated influences on an intellectual level as well, and may have encouraged the increasing urbanism and development of political constitutions that took place in the 8th to the 6th century in Greece. The following is a survey of Greek interaction with the broader Mediterranean environment.

3.3.1 Cyprus

The first literary evidence for Greeks on Cyprus in the Iron Age is an inscription dated to 1050 BCE.¹³ There is a tradition that Greek heroes founded new cities on Cyprus in the aftermath of the Trojan War. At any rate, important settlements such as Salamis and Kourion were established around the end of the 11th century BCE. Other major sites of the Iron Age, such as Idalion, Soloi and Amathus were probably founded at this time as well (Buitron-Oliver and Herscher 1997, 5). The presence in Cyprus of characteristic building techniques, as well as characteristic pottery, suggests that there was a Greek migration in the 11th century, and not a temporary establishment for trade (Osborne 1996, 22).

An Euboian Protogeometric skyphos and cup have been excavated at Amathus. These are the earliest Greek imports on Cyprus, and arrived well before 900 BCE. They match finds at Lefkandi. Coldstream argues that settlers on Cyprus maintained links with the Aegean (Coldstream 1986, 325). Both Greek pots and eastern imports occur together in Cypriote tombs from Amathus, indicating that it lay on the main Euboian-Phoenician trade route. This route went westward, to the colonies in Italy and Spain (ibid. 327).

Kition was a Greek site, which was gradually penetrated by Phoenicians. From the cemetery at Kition, it is evident that different ethnic groups lived in Kition during the Cypro-Archaic II and Classical periods (Hadjisavvas 1986, 362).

3.3.2 Lefkandi

Excavations at Lefkandi on Euboia, in the Toumba cemetery, have challenged the notion of a Greek Dark Age. Scholars differ in their interpretation of the finds, but all agree on the

unexpectedness of the contents of the graves: Imported grave goods speaking of contacts between Greece and the Near East from the 10th century onwards.

At Lefkandi, a huge apsidal building, containing a male and female burial has been excavated. They are thought to be a king and queen, and the building, 45 meters long, may originally have been the royal residence (Coldstream 1998, 355; Morris 2000, 218-238). The building is frequently referred to as the Heroon, and its male inhabitant has been named the Hero of Lefkandi. The wealth contained in the burial, and the sheer size of the building itself, implies a hierarchical organisation of the community. A small group or family were able to extract a surplus from the rest of the community to be able to afford a display like this (Osborne 1996, 43).

Excavations at Lefkandi on Euboia by Mervyn Popham and Irene S. Lemos in the 1980's and 1990's have revealed some astonishing graves in the Toumba cemetery with rich Oriental imports. Among the finds is a bronze bowl, from Tomb 55, embossed and engraved with an upper frieze of helmeted and winged sphinxes in between oriental "trees of life". The bowl was further decorated with a row of animals with palm trees around a central rosette. It is Near Eastern in origin, and North Syria has been suggested as a likely source. The burial is dated by a large Attic EG I oenochoe, with a date ca. 900 BCE (Popham, Calligas and Sacket 1988/89, 118).

An engraved Near Eastern bronze bowl was found in a woman's burial, Tomb 70 (Popham 1995, 103). It is comparable to bowls found on Cyprus, and dates to Late Protogeometric, i.e. 900 BCE (ibid. 106). The bowl is considered Phoenician in origin (ibid. 107, n. 5).¹⁴ In the same cemetery was a grave, Tomb 79, which contents include iron weaponry, (probably) weights and scales, a Syrian cylinder seal from 1800 BCE, and golden earrings. The cremated ashes of the buried man were collected in a nearly hemispheric bronze cauldron with lid (Popham and Lemos 1995, 151-153). A krater, Phoenician and Cypriote jugs and Bronze earrings were also found.

The preliminary conclusion of the excavators was that this is the burial of a warrior trader. It confirms the evidence of links between Euboia, the Near East and Cyprus in Protogeometric times, the grave itself being dated to Sub-Protogeometric II (ca. 900 BCE) (Popham and Lemos 1995, 156).

¹³ It is a Greek personal name, written in Cypro-syllabic script on an obelos from Palaeopaphos (Buitron-Oliver and Herscher 1997, 5). This has been interpreted as a possible continuity of Greek written culture on Cyprus, at a time when the rest of Greece was illiterate (Haug [unpublished] 4).

¹⁴ Other Near Eastern imports include a faience ring, nine golden rings and two iron pins with globes of crystal (Popham 1995, 103). An Attic pyxis was among the pottery found (ibid.)

3.3.3 North Syria: Al Mina; Tell Sukas; Ras el Bassit

The second most important site, after Lefkandi, for the discussion of Early Iron Age contacts between Greece and the Levant is Al Mina, at the mouth of the river Orontes in North Syria. It was excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley in the 1930's, and large amounts of Greek Geometric pottery made him regard it a Greek colony. Long thought to be an Euboian emporion in the Levant, its character and function is being questioned, as well as the ethnicity of its inhabitants. John Boardman, in a review article (1990), reassessed the role of the site as an initiator of the later Orientalising Revolution in Greek pottery and arts, questioning the claims to Phoenician priority in the spread of oriental goods in the Mediterranean.

The proportion of Greek to local pottery at the site must be said to be exceptional for the Levant in the 9th to 7th century, its approximate proportion of the pottery reaching over 50 % (Boardman 1990, 175). It is not the earliest site with Greek pottery, though, the first Iron Age Levantine finds of Greek pottery being Euboian skyphoi dating to the 10th century found at Tyre (ibid. 171). Other sites showing Geometric Greek pottery in the Levant include Tarsus, Tell Tainat, Ras el Bassit and Tell Sukas, the proportion of Greek pottery never reaching over 5 % of the total pottery (ibid. 171-75, table 1). Al Mina was probably a Phoenician settlement, showing some Cypriot wares as well as Levantine or Phoenician (bichrome and red slip ware) (ibid. 175). Other objects are of North Syrian origin, indicating an Aramaean population (ibid.176).

T. F. R. G. Braun (1982) asserts that Greeks are attested at Al Mina from 825 BCE onwards. The first written references to Greeks in the Levant are from the 730s, in Assyrian sources (Braun 1982, 3). Concerning Phoenician and Greek interaction, as described by Herodotos and Thukydidēs, there is little archaeological evidence to substantiate these claims. Phoenicians become evident in Greece in the 9th to the 6th century, but Braun maintains that the link between the Theban Kadmos and Phoenicia is a literary invention (ibid. 6-7).

The Greeks are attested in North Syria from Al Mina, but also from Tell Sukas, 72 km south of Al Mina. In the period ca. 850-675 BCE, the Greek sherds are similar to those at Al Mina, i.e. Euboian and Cycladic. At the level dated to ca. 675-498, the site is strongly marked by Greek influence. A woman's name has been found on a loomweight (Braun 1982, 11). An Ionian female name is inscribed on a spindle whorl from the 6th century found at Tell Sukas. This makes it probable that Greek families lived there permanently (Sørensen 1997, 288).

3.3.4 Pithekoussai

Pithekoussai was established by Euboians in the 8th century, on the island Ischia in the Bay of Naples (Boardman 1980, 165). There are Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions on vases found at the site (ibid. 166-8). A settlement on the mainland, Cumae, was established later than Pithekoussai. There, Greek pottery dated to 725 has been excavated. It is predominantly Corinthian, but also Euboian and in local styles (ibid. 168).

A Phoenician “Kleeblattkanne” found in a cremation burial from the 7th century at Pithekoussai may indicate a Phoenician enclave in the Greek colony. The Occidental colonial environment was probably quite heterogenic, not least because ventures may have originated at Cyprus, where there were already mixed communities of Greeks and Phoenicians (Bisi 1986, 349-50).

3.4 Discussion of individual sites¹⁵

The following discussions are meant as a presentation of the main interpretations of the finds at the individual sites, and their significance for the development of Greek culture. This is not meant to be an exhaustive review of every opinion on each site, but to discuss the views most relevant for an investigation of Greek interaction with the wider Mediterranean environment. The relations between Greeks and Phoenicians will be emphasised, since they were active in the same period and in the same areas, and the Phoenicians are regarded as contributors to Greek culture.

3.4.1 Lefkandi

Ian Morris, assessing the finds from Lefkandi, says the Lefkandians were one generation before the rest of central Greece in re-establishing contacts with the East. But the cemetery went out of use around 850-825, just as the graves' magnificence peaked (Morris 2000, 239). He attributes the orientalia in the graves to Phoenician penetration of the Aegean (ibid.251). Oriental metalwork becomes rare in central Greek graves by 800, curiously contrasting the abundance of Greek pottery in the east Mediterranean, especially Al Mina in Syria. Around 800, Euboian activities in the West are evident from finds of pottery at Sicily, Sardinia, Etruria, and Carthage and at Huelva. These finds are often in connection with Phoenician settlements (ibid.254). Morris argues that the finds of orientalia in 10th century Greek graves as evidence for Heroic aspirations in the local elite, and sees the change by 800 as an ideological reorganisation towards an egalitarian ethos (ibid. 255-256). An internally

¹⁵ For a synopsis of the phases discussed here, consult fig. 1.

egalitarian ruling class defined itself by rejecting the east and the past. Between the 10th and 6th centuries a classical community of middling citizens evolved (ibid. 238).

In Morris' view, eastern influences stand for elite values and are in opposition to egalitarian culture and democracy. The Phoenicians initiated contact with the Greeks, and their role is reduced to carrying luxury goods for the local, Greek elites. The view that all travelling Phoenicians were traders, and that the Greeks who bartered for these goods sought to identify themselves with a heroic past, seems to narrow the scope of possible modes of interaction between Greeks and foreigners too much. The hypothesis is an explanation of the lack of imports in Greek graves, but does not take into considerations other reasons for interaction than trade, or any consequences of interaction other than the acquisition of goods for the sake of status. The question is whether the east was wholly rejected, or perhaps had an influence on Greek culture beyond what may be found in graves.

Nicolas Coldstream puts the finds of exotica at Lefkandi in connection with finds of Greek pottery in Tyre dating to the 10th century (Coldstream 1998, 353). The pottery is Protogeometric, and published by Patricia Bikai (Bikai 1978, pls. 22a1, 30.3). More Protogeometric sherds have been unearthed, and they resemble the earliest finds of Greek pottery at Amathus on Cyprus. Especially frequent in the Levant are Euboian plates decorated with pendent concentric semi-circles, contrasting to only four found at Lefkandi. This led Coldstream to assume an Euboian export-initiative aimed at the Phoenician market (Coldstream 1998, 354). Concerning the finds from the Heroon at Lefkandi, he suggests that the grave goods of the supposed queen may point to her Near Eastern origin (ibid. 355). Egyptianising bronze vessels found in the Toumba cemetery and objects of faience point to trade with Egypt. This trade probably went through Tyre. Perhaps this might indicate some intermarriage between an elite family in Tyre and the Hero of Lefkandi. This would mean that the contact between Euboea and the Levant was not only based on Greeks seeking raw-materials in the Near East, but was dependent on personal links between elites (ibid. 356).

Coldstream argues that there may have been ties of reciprocity between Euboians and peoples of the Near East, even exchange of wives. This is, of course, very difficult to prove, but is a reminder how exchange relations in a pre-monetary and pre-market economy follow rules of reciprocity rather than profit-maximising incentives. This contrasts with his own suggestion that Euboians may have produced plates for the Phoenician market. The element of personal ties between the parts in exchange relations should at any rate be taken into consideration when discussing the finds at Lefkandi. The contacts between Greeks and the Near East had consequences beyond the exchange of material goods.

3.4.2 Al Mina

John Boardman (1980; 1990) states that the orientalising of Greek material culture began in the 10th century. The Orientalising Revolution of the 8th century was a result of contacts between Euboia and North Syria (Al Mina). He argues that the Greeks themselves were mostly responsible for this development, and its effects are evident in every aspect of Greek culture. Further, he cautions against putting too much emphasis on bulk-trade in minerals, and argues that the Greeks may have been the ones searching for metals, not the easterners (Boardman 1990, 185). Orientalia in the west which have survived are mainly not utilitarian, and found in sanctuaries and tombs, whatever their original functions. They may have been brought back to Greece by Euboian travellers as prestige items, maybe gifts from elites abroad (ibid. 177-8). The carriers of Egyptian, North Syrian and Greek goods to Greek sanctuaries are hard to identify, but might have been Phoenicians. Boardman argues a case for the Euboians and their fellow islanders, since their activities in North Syria and Italy are well attested for the 8th century (Boardman 1990, 181). Later, East Greeks from Samos and Rhodes seem to have taken over trade with the east (ibid. 182).

Boardman argues against the hypothesis that Phoenicians traded metal for slaves with the Greeks. The emphasis on travel as an element of exchange is important; the main purpose of going abroad may have been to establish contacts or visit foreign parts of the world, not necessarily to barter or sell goods. Phoenician piety as a motivation behind the distribution of orientalia in sanctuaries is an intriguing notion, but Boardman maintains that the main carriers of such goods were the Euboians. It is difficult to see why nobody else could have taken interest in Greek sanctuaries in the 8th century, since votives from foreigners are well attested in later literary sources.

John K. Papadopoulos is sceptical to the attribution of an important role to the Euboians in establishing contacts with the Near East and colonising the Mediterranean (Papadopoulos 1997, 191). He criticises the view that Euboians took the initiative to visit the eastern Mediterranean first, and then established an emporion at Al Mina. He questions the identification of the merchant-trader of Lefkandi as an Euboian, as to why it should necessarily be a Greek and not an itinerant Phoenician buried in Greece. He is also critical of the assumption that Greek pottery on Cyprus and on the Levant can be attributed to gift-exchange between Euboians and local elites, and calls to mind the importance of public display of exotica in temples (ibid. 199).

Papadopoulos argues that pottery was not treasure fit for gift-exchange, making the finds of Euboian pottery in the East a weak argument for elite exchange. He further points to the known composite cargoes of Archaic ships, and the unclear ethnicity of its crew (Papadopoulos 1997, 199-200).

Papadopoulos states that the orientalia from Lefkandi might be evidence for Lefkandi as a place where enterprising Easterners, i.e. Phoenicians, North Syrians and Cypriots, might have co-existed with the Greeks (Papadopoulos 1997, 206). This is further taken as a confirmation of the theory that the Early Iron Age Mediterranean was a world-system where local exchange cycles and long-distance trade were integrated in a system of intervention and response (ibid. 207, cf. Sherratt and Sherratt 1993).

The argument that ethnicity is difficult to assess from archaeological finds is no doubt a good reminder that the use of the term “Euboians” in archaeology is problematic. Euboian activities in the East are hardly attested in literary sources, so there is of course a possibility that intense Near Eastern activities on Euboea would go likewise unnoticed. An itinerant foreigner could at any rate have been buried at Lefkandi. The finds from the Toumba cemetery, however, are fairly consistent, and point towards an elite with some contacts to the Near East. It is as yet no architecture or other finds which would warrant a sizeable settlement of foreign traders. That they met at Lefkandi and later left without leaving further traces is another matter.

Papadopoulos is no doubt correct when he states that pottery was not fit for gift-exchange. There is a question, however, what was in them when they arrived, and what may have accompanied them, which is now lost. Much of what is known to have been gifts between international elites were perishable goods, which would leave no archaeological evidence.

The idea Lefkandi as part of a world-system is intriguing. However, such a system denotes a degree of interdependence and integration which is unlikely to have been technically possible at the time. The lack of control and difficulties of regular maintenance and supervision of obligations make it unlikely that an integration of smaller exchange cycles could be undertaken to any effect.

3.4.3 The West

According to Boardman, the Greeks were the first traders on Sicily (Boardman 1980, 210). Boardman argues that there was competition over metal-trade between Phoenicians and

Greeks (ibid. 210-1). As a consequence, there were clashes between them, and this resulted in slight cultural exchange (ibid. 215).

An exception to Papadopoulos' general denial of Euboian activities would be Pithekoussai, as well as Cymae, were it not for the dubious sources to their origin, namely Strabo and Livy, both late (Papadopoulos 1997, 201). He further argues that "Greek" and "Phoenician" is problematic to distinguish archaeologically (ibid. 203).

Boardman argues that the Greeks and Phoenicians were bitter enemies, for which there are only very late sources, whereas Papadopoulos argues that there is no way to distinguish who actually founded or inhabited the site. There are several indications that relations between Phoenicians and Greeks were quite peaceful and rewarding at Pithekoussai. Perhaps the Greeks adapted the Phoenician alphabet there. There is at any rate little to warrant a view that the two peoples had little to do with each other, because of competition or otherwise. Phoenicians and Greek pottery is found together at many sites. Several colonial sites may have had a mixed population, like is known to have been the case at Cyprus.

3.4.4 Sanctuaries

A parallel to Graeco-Phoenician relations may be the finds of Phrygian goods in Greek sanctuaries at Samos, Olympia, the Argive Heraion, Perachora and elsewhere, which indicate that Phrygians travelled long distances to honour Greek deities (Muscarella 1989, 339-342). Also, king Gyges of Lydia and king Midas of Phrygia are reported by Herodotos to have lavished gifts upon the oracle at Delphi (Hdt. 1.14). This might indicate that the oriental imports found in Greece was not intended for a local elite, but were gifts to the gods.

Francois de Polignac asks whether extra-urban cults along the coast of the Aegean may have been due to visits from Phoenicians in the 10th and 9th centuries. He argues that the many foreign votives in the Samian Heraion not so much prove that the sanctuary was frequented by foreigners as much as they demonstrate how the sanctuary was placed at the heart of a system of relations between the Aegean and the Orient (de Polignac 1992, 122).

This is a further argument against the view that all exchange relations were motivated by trade. Piety, and a wish to participate in cultic life at the sanctuaries, such as sports and festivals, may have been an impetus for visiting sanctuaries and depositing votives.

3.5 Trading colonies or agricultural settlements?

Most scholars agree that Greek colonisation was a result of population growth and the need for new agricultural land. Not all new settlements can be immediately explained as

agricultural settlements, however, since the soil at many places seem unfit for the establishment of an agricultural colony. Some settlements, like Al Mina and Pithekoussai have been explained as predominantly trading posts for Greeks looking for metals and valuable finished products for which to barter.

According to T. F. R. G. Braun (1982), there was metal trade which lured the Euboians to the Levant. Ezekiel mentions Yawan (=Ionians) bringing trade to Tyre (Ez. 27:13) (Braun 1982, 11). Trade in luxuries with the Levant, such as cloth or metal artefacts, is evident from the Homeric epics (ibid.12-13). Braun argues that these goods were paid for by slaves, and that there was a link between trade and piracy (ibid. 14). Sargon II mentions victories over Ionians in Cilicia and on the sea, in inscriptions dated to 715 BCE and onwards (ibid. 15-16). Braun similarly argues that Greek activities in the West, in Tartessos, were motivated by search for metals (ibid. 20).

As will be seen when discussing the Phoenician Mediterranean expansion, it seems safe to say that search for metals was not the only explanation for Greek ventures abroad. A wide range of motivations, such as land-hunger, drive to establish exchange relations with foreign elites, and adventure, lies behind the colonisation movement. An international culture seems to have existed, of which Greeks and Phoenicians were parts, and relations between locals and foreigners do not seem to have been dictated by commercial interests only. Of course, there must have been reasons why the Euboians went to exactly Pithekoussai, and not anywhere else, but at the same time, there are several instances of settlements which cannot be traced back to mining or trade in ore as an objective. There were several reasons for migration at work at the same time.

Sarah P. Morris (1992) claims that the Greeks abroad in the Early Iron Age were no diaspora of refugees, but of entrepreneurs (P. Morris 1992, 122). She argues that the Greek expansion into the wider Mediterranean was one of trade, rather than a process of migration (ibid. 125). There were trading relations between Greeks and Phoenicians, and Phoenicians may have influenced Greek constitutions (ibid. 135). In her view, the excavations at Lefkandi dispel the Dark Age (ibid. 140).

It seems a bit optimistic to proclaim the end of the Dark Age on the basis of excavations at one site only. The finds do make good many assumptions about early Greek and Near Eastern interaction, but the nature of this interaction is far from clear. Again, the argument that the Greeks did not migrate, but were international entrepreneurs, seems to underestimate the lack of financial institutions which might have made a market economy possible, and the logistical difficulties in maintaining control of trade over longer distances.

Relations between Greeks and peoples of the Near East must have been more than just commercial, as is evident from elements of Near Eastern mythology in Greek poetry, the adoption of the alphabet and the Orientalising Revolution itself. That there were itinerant artisans in the Mediterranean is no doubt true, but they must at any time have been few in number. Many of the Greek migrants, on the other hand, were probably farmers looking for land and not professional traders. This might be argued simply on the question of how the communities fed themselves. A polis abroad is unlikely to have been able to barter everything the community needed with exported pots or woven cloth.¹⁶

John-Paul Wilson (1997) discusses whether Greek settlements abroad in the Archaic period should be termed *emporion* or *apoikiai*. An *emporion* is predominantly a harbour for trade, whereas an *apoikia* is more of a colonial settlement. The use of the terms may be revealing for the development of the polis. Settlements such as Pithekoussai may have been a model for the infant polis (Wilson 1997, 199). In Herodotos, *emporion* and polis are used interchangeably of trading ports (ibid. 204). Wilson asks whether the *apoikia* may have been a catalyst for the polis. The settlements abroad had *autarcheia* in the 8th century. He argues that the opposition between formal *apoikiai* and informal *emporion* may have been created in the Classical period (ibid. 205-6). This may indicate that the difference between forms of settlements abroad was not that strict in the Archaic period. There may have been a fleeting division between colonial settlements and trading ports. This is a further argument against the hypothesis of a predominantly commercial Greek venture into the Mediterranean.

3.6 A learning environment

Günter Kopce (1992) argues that Greeks received knowledge from the Easterners through acquaintance and self-interest. The Phoenicians taught some Greeks the alphabet, probably in several places, but had no role as instructors. Rather, an environment may have existed, between Al Mina, Tyre, and Pithekoussai, on ships, in inconspicuous landings and villages, where persistent interaction and intentional and unintentional exchange of information took place. Kopce argues that Greeks learning from the East were pragmatic; looking for useful innovations, they adopted what seemed suitable from what they happened to come across (Kopce 1992, 112-3).

¹⁶ E.g. Thuc. 6.23-87; 7.1-87: The Athenian expedition to Sicily ends in disaster, partly because the troops are without sufficient resources, and are unable to settle down to produce their own food. They cannot obtain enough resources locally, although they brought wares for trade with them.

Kopce places the initiative with the Greeks, but emphasises the development of a sphere of interaction. In his view, this sphere was marginal to the political centres.

Against the emphasis on Phoenicians as sources to Greek adoptions of Oriental technology and ideas, Wolfgang Röllig (1992) argues that the Anatolian link should not be underestimated (Röllig 1992, 93). Syria was a nexus of contact between Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and Egypt, and developed a mixed culture (ibid. 94). He argues that itinerant craftsmen and scribes were responsible for a cultural transfer between Greeks and the Orient. This took place between the 10th and the 7th century. Röllig argues for a land-route for the transfer of the alphabet to the Greeks, via a Phoenician or Aramaean script, since inscriptions in these scripts have been found together with Hieroglyphic-Luwian inscriptions in the post-Hittite kingdoms of southern Anatolia (ibid. 96-8). At least part of the Mesopotamian tradition reached Greece via Asia Minor: Hittite or Hurrute adaptations of Mesopotamian ideas might have to be taken into consideration when discussing the cultural contacts between East and West in the 8th century (ibid. 102).

This inclusion of Anatolia into the network of interaction between Greeks and Near Eastern cultures fits the sources discussed in the previous chapter. The Greek in Ionia were important innovators of Greek culture in the 6th century.

3.7 The adoption of writing

The Greeks probably adopted the alphabet from the Phoenicians, in the 8th century. The alphabet, however, was a fairly recent invention, compared to Egyptian hieroglyphs or cuneiform. The earliest larger Phoenician inscription is that on the sarcophagus of Ahirom of Byblos, dated about 1000 (von Soden 1985 [1992], 37).

The earliest Greek alphabetical inscription is from Osteria dell'Osa in Latium, and is dated to ca. 775 BCE (Ridgway 1996, 87). It reads *eulin*, and is scratched on a flask. The suggestion has therefore been made that it should be equated with the Greek *eulinos*, i.e. “good at spinning” (ibid. 92). Ridgway argues that the inscription is evidence for an Euboian visit to the Italic community at Osteria dell'Osa, perhaps an inconclusive “fact-finding mission” to establish exchange relations. The Euboians at any rate probably adopted the alphabet from first-hand observation of Phoenician commercial practice. This either took place on Cyprus, or in Al Mina, or perhaps Rhodes (ibid. 95).¹⁷

¹⁷ Ridgway further wonders whether the inscription found in Latium may have any connection with later traditions for the education of Remus and Romulus at Gabii, but leaves it as an open speculation (Ridgway 1996, 96-7).

This explanation of the adaptation of the script seems to argue that the Greeks learned writing for a commercial purpose. This contrasts with the inscription itself. The indication that the alphabet was adapted to the Greek language in the international colonial environment, however, seems reasonable.

An early Greek abecedary on a copper plaque (Schøyen MS 108) has been dated to the 9-8th century BCE, although there is no documented archaeological context for the object (Scott, Woodard, McCarter, Zuckerman, and Lundberg [forthcoming], 8-13). The text is on a hammered copper plaque, and consists of a form of the Greek alphabet that is otherwise unattested. There are twenty-two characters in the so-called the Fayum-alphabet (the reported place of origin of the plaque). It is argued that the Fayum-alphabet is at ground-zero for the development of the Greek alphabet from its Phoenician parent script (ibid. 2-3). The plaque was found in Northern Egypt, but may have been manufactured on Cyprus and transported there. The reason for its production is unknown, as is its purpose (ibid. 6).

As neither the date nor the origins of the plaque are certain, further conclusions from this evidence seem risky.

A famous early Greek inscription is on the so-called “Cup of Nestor”, a Rhodian Late Geometric kotyle from late 8th century Pithekoussai. The inscription is a parody of Homer (Il. 11.632-7), and praises Aphrodite. Its origins is a combination of East Greek, Euboian, Rhodian and Phoenician elements, and may serve to demonstrate to what extent Pithekoussai formed a cosmopolitan society where diverse cultural traditions were enjoyed (Osborne 1996, 117-8).

Dag Haug [unpublished] argues that the Greeks adopted the alphabet either in Al Mina or at Pithekoussai, and that it is likely that the Euboians were involved. The earliest Greek inscriptions are from Pithekoussai, although the eldest comes from Latium, and some of the earliest Greek inscriptions from Greece proper are from Euboea (Haug [unpublished], 4). None of the early Greek inscriptions are of an official nature, nor are there any private, economic inscriptions. The script seems rather to have been used for entertainment in an aristocratic society, in inscriptions such as that on “Cup of Nestor” (ibid. 6). Haug therefore argues that the Greeks not necessarily adopted the alphabet for book-keeping or trade (ibid. 8).

The adoption of the Phoenician script demonstrates the extent of interaction between Greeks and Phoenicians. Greeks obviously spent time together with Phoenicians in a peaceful way, with none of the fierce competition or enmity which supposedly was the result of their meetings abroad. The early finds of inscriptions from the colonial environment of

Pithekoussai is an argument in favour of cultural interaction in the colonies over time. Rather than being traders on brief visits, operating outside the communities they encountered, both Greeks and Phoenicians established communities of their own, and interacted with each other. The alphabet may have been adapted many times, for that matter, in North-Syria, on Cyprus, and on Pithekoussai. The Greeks at any rate seem to have taken over the alphabet not out of practical necessities, but as a part of an eclectic adaptation of foreign cultural elements. The alphabet, like other elements, was formed to suit Greek needs and purposes.

3.8 Conclusion

Even though most scholars agree on Phoenicians as the main source of oriental exotica found in Greek soil, there is some discussion on who took the initiative in exchange between Greece and the Near East. John Boardman (1990) argues that the Euboians may have sailed to Syria and established friendships with local elites and entered exchange relations. His hypothesis diminishes the role of Phoenician traders in the Aegean. John Papadopoulos (1997) argues that Phoenicians were after all the main traders in the Mediterranean in the Iron Age, and denies any importance of Euboians or Syrians. He accuses scholars who concentrate their interests on Greek initiatives of anti-Semitism, and requests studies which concern the whole of the ethnic and cultural complexities in Mediterranean interaction. Whatever the outcome of this debate, it is interesting to note the multiple agents active in Iron Age trade. The ethnicity of the traders themselves is almost impossible to decide from archaeology, and is probably a false start for a debate on Iron Age trade. The complexities in the dynamics of initiative and response in exchange involves more than a question of where the different objects came from and who brought them; interesting questions are why and how.

The Greeks partly entered and partly created learning environments, or spheres of intellectual exchange, abroad. This brought them into contact with the more advanced urban societies of the Near East, and prompted cultural and technological changes in the Greek nascent poleis. Their close encounters with inhabitants of Levantine city-states may have influenced their own views on how a political society should be organised.

The situations of exchange were varied, and ranged from direct visits to the Near East, where Greeks may have exchanged gifts with local elites and bartered goods with the local population, to encounters in the periphery, in colonies far from home. Sanctuaries were focal points for foreign exchange. Meetings with foreigners also implied exchange of information

and news. This might have shaped or influenced political decisions, especially on where to send colonies.

Greek interaction with the Near East, both in the east and in the western colonies, transformed Greek society. This was a general influence, disseminated and locally adapted throughout the Greek world. This may be evident from the many local adaptations of the script: The principles remained, but there were local variants. The political environment, i.e. the conceptual horizon for political developments, changed with the broadened view of possible solutions to constitutional questions. The development towards an egalitarian culture and direct democracy was not in opposition to the Near East, but a result of Greek participation in a greater political environment.

4 The Phoenicians in the Mediterranean: Interaction and cultural transfer*

4.1 Introduction

Cultural changes in 8th century Greece may have been influenced by interaction with Phoenicians. What was the nature of this interaction? In which ways did Greeks and Phoenicians interact? This is an attempt at investigating the interaction between Greeks and Phoenicians from a Phoenician view, to elucidate the circumstances of the proposed Phoenician cultural influences on Greek political developments.

The Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean, attested from finds on Cyprus from the 9th century onwards,¹⁸ and later on Euboea, Sicily, the North African coast and the Iberian Peninsula, is frequently interpreted as a mercantile network after the fashion of a capitalist world-system. The world-system was a concept developed by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) to describe colonialist exploitation of underdeveloped regions.¹⁹ The idea of a pre-modern world-system working in ways similar to a modern core-periphery dynamic of local markets integrated into an overall system has resulted in many new theories on the diffusion of culture. Susan and Andrew Sherratt provided a work dealing with the Mediterranean (1993). Following their concept of a world-system, Michael Sommer wrote an analysis of the Phoenician Mediterranean expansion in modernising terms (Sommer 2000). The paradigm is import of raw materials extracted from underdeveloped local cultures and export of finished products back to these same cultures by Phoenician entrepreneurs.

*Parts of this chapter were presented as a paper at the International Research Seminar between Izmir-Ege University and Berlin-Freie Universität: “Exogenous Factors in the Development of Cultures of the Ancient Near East and Migration”, 02.06.03-03.06.03, titled “The Phoenician Mediterranean Expansion During the Iron Age: Trade, Migration, Pilgrimage or Elite Exchange? A Challenge of the World-System Theory”. I am grateful for the comments and response of the other participants and the teachers at the seminar.

¹⁸ Excavations at Lefkandi have made it not improbable that a Phoenician expansion into the Mediterranean was initiated already in the 11th century. At Tyre, Attic Protogeometric imports date to the 10th century (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 56)

¹⁹ Wallerstein’s point of departure is the colonial situation and its beginnings in the 16th century. He aimed at explaining changes in the European sovereign states as consequent upon the evolution and interaction of a world-system (Wallerstein 1974, 7). The distinctive feature of the modern world-system is that it is an economic, but not a political entity (ibid. 15). The world-system is a total system; it is self-contained as an economic-material entity. There are two varieties of such a world-system: World-empires, in which there is a political system over most of the area; and “world-economies”, where such a political coherence does not exist. Prior to the modern era, world-economies tended either to be converted into empires or to disintegrate (ibid. 348). A world-system has extensive division of labour, not merely functional, but geographical. This is in part the consequence of ecological considerations, but for the most part, it is a function of the social organization of work, i.e. the exploitation of labour and uneven distribution of the surplus. Core-states, the advantaged areas of the world-economy, tend to have a strong state machinery coupled with a national culture, i.e. integration. World-economies are divided into core-states and peripheral areas; in the latter, the indigenous state is weak (ibid. 349).

A world-system hypothesis of centre and periphery gives a too static picture of the relationship between the exchange partners. It runs the danger of placing too much emphasis on the importance of trade for profit in cultural exchange. Material gain is not to be dissociated from other motivations for trade in pre-industrial economies. To maximise profit is not the prime motivating factor in a pre-industrial economy. Exchange and trade for reasons of status, as well as for forging political alliances and fulfilling religious obligations were important aspects of the economy. The following is a thesis including migration, pilgrimage to international cultic centres and exchange among elites as explanatory factors to understand the mechanisms behind the Phoenician expansion and the establishment of contacts with other Mediterranean cultures.

What was the nature of Phoenician trade and their settlements abroad? Is it possible to draw a definite line between long distance trade, colonisation and migration? Were Greeks and Phoenicians economic competitors, or were they involved in common cycles of exchange? Were these exchange cycles primarily arenas for cultural exchange, or did they constitute a price-fixing, competitive market?

Unfortunately, most Iron Age layers in the Levant are disturbed by subsequent building phases. Inscriptions do exist, as well as some distinctive pottery and artefacts, notably red-slip ware for domestic use (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 92), and luxuries such as carved ivories and silver bowls (Heinz 2002, 229). The production of purple dye from the murex-snail has left piles of shells at many Phoenician sites. The spread and development of elements of Phoenician culture can be examined based on archaeological finds. But few written sources from the Phoenicians themselves have survived. It is difficult to determine the mechanisms behind the Phoenician ventures abroad. We don't get very far without literary evidence from the Greeks and Hebrews.

But there is a problem of definition. The term Phoenician is Homeric. His Phoenicians are traders and seafarers. Earlier 11th century Biblical sources also tell of sea-faring traders from the Levantine cities, but they are not strictly differentiated from the other Canaanites. Our oldest source for Iron Age trade is the account of the Egyptian Wen-Amon, who is bargaining for cedar-wood with the king of Tyre. These sources illustrate a wide variety in modes of trade and exchange in the Iron Age: Barter, votive-gifts, tribute, gift-exchange and state-level trade.

The fact is the distribution of Phoenician settlements and artefacts abroad. The question we must try to answer is why and how they got there. What is Iron Age trade? Was there a market in any way similar to our modern market economy, or were all exchange

relations embedded in society? Was the economic sector independent of social values and customs, or was every economic transaction at the same time a social act? This brings us to the old formalist vs. substantivist debate, the substantivists still owing most of their arguments to Karl Polanyi.²⁰ The main argument against a free market economy in the ancient world is the manifest lack of a steady banking system, interest rates and bank guarantees:

Accumulation of capital and investment in a modern was not possible. Further, the absence of institutions for the supervision and control of credits or for enforcing fair competition made anything like free trade impossible. The concept of free trade, far from being the mere absence of constraints on the movement of goods and services, was a carefully planned system demanding specific working institutions to function.²¹ For free trade to be postulated in an ancient economy, the presence of such institutions in the given society must be proven.

Apart from the lack of institutions making free trade possible in ancient economies, values and morals might have prevented ancient traders from seeking to maximise profit, as most transactions were done on a face-to-face basis. Lack of interest in profit other than that which can be converted into social prestige is striking in most pre-industrial economies. Following these assumptions, scholars seek to describe ancient economies in terms of “primitive” exchange systems known from anthropological studies. Especially important have been the works of Marcel Mauss and Marshall Sahlins.²² This is the so-called “substantivist school”. The central terms are reciprocity and redistribution. A transaction is part of a system of exchange where the reciprocation of a gift in like measure is expected. The goods transacted are invested in prestige, not as capital.²³ The prestige of a leader depends on his ability to redistribute goods among his followers. The success or failure of a government depends on how the goods produced or imported are distributed among the citizens.

The formalists, on the other hand, are looking for structurally similar patterns of economic behaviour repeating itself throughout history. Thus, Wallerstein's world-system, originally devised to describe modern capitalist society, is used to describe systems of

²⁰ Explaining the differences between these terms, Polanyi has two definitions of the meaning of the term “economic”: The substantive meaning is defined as man’s interchange with the natural and social environment, whereas the formal meaning is derived from the logical character of the means-ends relationship; means are chosen by the logic of rational action. These two root meanings have nothing in common. The substantive meaning derives from fact, the formal from logic (Polanyi 1957 [1992], 29).

²¹ For an analysis of this development, see especially Karl Polanyi: *The Great Transformation*, New York and Toronto 1944.

²² Marcel Mauss: *Essai Sur le don – forme et raison de l’échange dans les sociétés archaïques*, Paris 1950 and Marshall Sahlins: *Stone Age Economics*, New York 1972 in particular.

²³ “Economic action is socially situated and cannot be explained by reference to individual motives alone. It is embedded in ongoing networks of personal relationships rather than being carried out by atomized actors” (Granovetter and Swedberg 1992, 9).

transaction in the ancient world. Transactions are seen as integrated in a feedback system where raw materials pass from a recessive periphery to a dominant core. Finished products, then, as well as culture pass from the advanced core to the primitive periphery. This form of exploitation and cultural diffusion is seen as a universal historical phenomenon. Trade is treated as a separate sphere in ancient economies, and as not embedded in cultural contacts and exchange. Traders are analysed as more or less independent entrepreneurs looking to maximise profit.²⁴

The present thesis involves motivations for the Phoenician expansion into the Mediterranean other than trade and exchange, namely migration and pilgrimage. As a working definition of migration, it covers the movement of people, as representatives of a culture, with their own language, customs and material culture, to a new home separate from where they lived before. They reproduce, or claim to reproduce their own forms of social organisation, but at the same time integrate themselves in and adjust themselves to a foreign cultural and natural habitat. The term pilgrimage is used here in the loose sense of travelling to a sanctuary, as a rule accompanied by the depositing of a votive gift. These forms of movement also involve the movement and possible exchange of goods, without the expedition as such aiming at trade. This model for the process of Phoenician expansion is meant to provide the framework necessary to understand how Phoenicians might have influenced Greek political culture.

In the following examination, a digest of the archaeological sources are presented in brief, followed by the relevant ancient texts. Classical authors later than Thukydides will not be discussed. This is because later writers tend to confuse Phoenician and Punic matters. Besides, there is every reason to be sceptical in cases where a later writer claims to know more than an earlier one. An exception is made for the Old Testament, namely the Book of Kings I and Ezekiel, even though their information on Phoenician matters is unlikely to be accurate and must be corroborated by the Assyrian inscriptions. After the presentation of the sources follows a review of the views and arguments of scholars engaged in the problems discussed in this thesis, in comparison with the information obtained from the aforementioned sources. Thereupon follows a conclusion.

²⁴ On the other hand, economic action is neither completely embedded in all pre-industrial societies, nor are economic actions “disembedded” in capitalist societies (Granovetter and Swedberg 1992, 10).

4.2 Archaeological evidence

The following survey of archaeological sites is meant to provide a basis for an examination of the nature of the Phoenician Mediterranean expansion. Important in this respect would be evidence for industrial activities, such as murex-shells, mass-produced pottery and indications of metallurgical activities. Further, evidence for permanent settlements abroad, such as cemeteries, houses, farmsteads, and indications of agricultural activities, is particularly important to determine whether the Phoenicians abroad were itinerant traders or migrating settlers.

4.2.1 Metropoleis of the Levant: Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, Sarepta

The Phoenician cities on the Levant were all inhabited throughout the Bronze Age, continuing into the Iron Age, with the exception of Tell Kazel, seemingly unscathed by the catastrophes attested in the 13th century. Being left alone by the Sea-peoples or whatever it was which brought about the general destruction heralding the advent of the Iron Age, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre and Sarepta enjoyed political independence from Egypt (Klengel 1992, 184). They escaped annexation into the Neo-Assyrian Empire until the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727), and were first brought under foreign rule by the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562) (Klengel 1992, 223).

The cities of Byblos, Sidon and Tyre were mediators of wares for others as well as exporters of their own products. These included purple-dyed textiles, glass objects, metal-work, wood and ivory carving and agricultural products such as wine, olive oil and figs. Contacts with Greeks are evident from finds in Tyre and Sarepta from the 10th century (Klengel 1992, 191-2). Tyre had the by far leading role in this exchange with the Greeks, whereas Sarepta was a participant on a lower scale (Koehl 1985, 148).²⁵

The Iron Age layers of these sites are all disturbed by subsequent building-phases, and the only excavation undertaken to specifically investigate the Phoenician material is the excavation of Sarepta undertaken by James B. Pritchard in the 1970's. The rather small site lies between the more important Byblos and Sidon on the Levantine coast, and has yielded an undisturbed continuing profile from the bedrock through Hellenistic and Roman times. The soundings X and Y have been published in preliminary reports, as well as later analyses of the Late Bronze and Iron Age finds. The sounding X was made in the so-called industrial sector,

²⁵ The majority of imported sherds found in Tyre come from Cyprus, their exact place of manufacture is only possible to know through the neutron activation process, but their style is nevertheless Greek (Bikai 1978, 53). During the later 8th and 7th centuries, a style of pottery is found in Sarepta referred to as Cypro-Phoenician ware, incorporating Phoenician forms and motives, but executed with Cypriote technique and compass drawn concentric circles. They are unguent bottles, and were very popular in the East Mediterranean (Koehl 1985, 148).

where there were only few dwellings, but a high number of kilns, a pit with murex shells and evidence for metal industry (Pritchard 1978, 74).²⁶ The whole sounding suggests a peaceful evolvement of the site without any major catastrophes traceable in the archaeological data (ibid. 82-85). Finds of weights, cylinder seals and stamp seals are indicative of trading activities.²⁷ There was a dearth of objects used in warfare (ibid. 91-93). The excavated pottery kilns numbered over twenty and are indicative of large-scale production of pottery (ibid. 111-126). Red Slip ware, which is indicative evidence for Phoenician presence, was found in abundance at the site (ibid. 73-74). Also, murex-shells from the same area point to production of the famous purple dye (ibid.126). Finds indicative of metalworking complete the picture of this industrial sector of the site (ibid. 127-29).

From this evidence, it is possible to maintain the hypothesis that the Phoenicians produced goods for export. It does not indicate, however, that the whole populace was engaged in their production, nor that they were dependent upon these activities for survival.

4.2.2 First steps: Cyprus; Kition, Amathus

Phoenicians are attested at Kition from the 9th century onwards,²⁸ and finds at the site reveal a wide net of contacts encompassing Egypt, Phoenicia and the Greek world. It was a Phoenician city, as is evident from a large corpus of inscriptions in Phoenician beginning in the 8th century (Yon 1997, 9-10). It was an important city in the Cypro-Geometric III and Cypro-Archaic I-III periods, and a decisive step in the colonisation of the West by Tyre at the end of the 9th century BCE. In the 8th century Kition must have played an important role in relation to Assyria. Sargon II (721-705) set up his stele in 707 BCE at Kition (ibid. 11).

At Amathus, a site inhabited mainly by Eteocypriots and later by Greeks, graves with Eastern vases, Phoenician shaped copies and Aegean types of iron spits and knives indicate contacts with Greece and the Near East from 1050 onwards (Aupert 1997, 23). Egyptian imports are dated from 950-900 BCE onwards, whereas the first Greek imports from Euboea and Attica date to 850-800 BCE. A necropolis dating to the end of the Cypro-Geometric and beginning of the Cypro-Archaic period has given evidence that the Phoenicians were present in Amathus during the 8th century. Inscriptions relating to a Phoenician dynasty point to a mixed population (ibid. 24).

²⁶ The relevant strata are G throughout to C, and in G were found crucibles with slag dated from a LH IIIC jar to the late 13th century. Three constructions of a basin with an adjacent sump layer show similarities with a basin with drain and sump excavated at Enkomi on Cyprus. The construction there was part of a larger metallurgical complex, and may have served to wash copper ore (Pritchard 1978, 77-79).

²⁷ In stratum F was found a weight in the form of a heifer filled with lead (Pritchard 1978, 82). A stone anchor similar to finds at Phoenician colonies was found, as well as a model boat (ibid. 91).

The Phoenicians were involved with Greeks on Cyprus as neighbours and fellow settlers, and not in a relationship of traders and customers.

4.2.3 Enmity and Exchange: Sicily and Sardinia; Motya; Sulcis

Of the Phoenician cities mentioned by Thukydides, only one, Motya, has been excavated with a view to reconstruct a Phoenician settlement. It was founded in the 8th century. Claims to earlier foundation dates have not been confirmed by archaeological finds. It was a Phoenician trading town, which eventually became a Carthaginian base. Possible due to Greek encroachments, the city was fortified in the 7th to 6th century (Isserlin and Plat Taylor 1974, 83). The town seems to have been open until the 6th century, and the Phoenicians succeeded in keeping aggressive Greek settlers at bay. After the defeat at Himera in 480 BCE (cf. Hdt. 7.167), the town was further fortified (Isserlin and Plat Taylor 1974, 84). The city was destroyed in 397 BCE (ibid. 74).

Storehouses in good condition have been excavated, and these are considered too large to have been constructed for domestic purposes only (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 63). A puzzling find from Motya is the so-called Youth from Motya, found in 1979 in the vicinity of the Cappiddazzu-temple. It is the only marble statue of its size found on Sicily, and does not fit any stylistic category. A Greek sculptor probably made it, but dates vary from the 5th century to Hellenistic times (Berns 2002, 147-8).²⁹ At any rate, the sculpture neatly portrays the cultural syncretism of Greeks and Phoenicians in the West.

The Phoenicians also settled on Sardinia. Phoenician objects have been found in indigenous necropoleis (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 75). The settlements Tharros and Nora are situated on the coast, whereas Sulcis is situated on an islet. A *tophet* was in use at Sulcis on Sardinia from the 8th century on, and a range of fortifications, the best known being that on Mount Sirai, was erected from the 7th century onwards. The inland fortification on Mount Sirai is built on top of an abandoned *nuragha* (monumental complex at the centre of indigenous settlements) (Aubert 1993, 205).

There are few indications that Greeks and Phoenicians were enemies on Sicily, in opposition to what may be inferred from Thukydides. Conflicts from the Punic period are

²⁸ Phoenicians had settled in Kition by Cypro-Geometric III (850-750) (Aupert 1997, 24).

²⁹ From comparisons with the hairdo of the Tyrant Slayers, the *Buckellocken*, the sculpture should perhaps be attributed to the severe style of the 5th century. But it also shows peculiarities, such as the folds of fat around the youth's fingers, as well as the emphasised *membrum virilis*, both unusual for the severe style. Also, the chiton is quite unique, showing similarities with Assyrian charioteers' outfits. The leather bands around the chest also bespeak some martial role of the person portrayed (I am grateful to Nils Ritter for this information).

attested, but need not mean that Greeks and Phoenicians did not get along in the 8th and 7th centuries.

4.2.4 Gold rush at the Pillars of Hercules: Iberia; Tartessos

The Greek term Tartessos, Hebrew Taršiš, is a cover-all for the culture of southern Spain and Portugal in the LBA and EIA. Herodotus tells how the Phokaians, the first of the Greeks to undertake long-distance ventures at sea, came to Tartessos (Hdt. 1.163). Concerning the fabled riches of this distant region, Herodotus says that Kolaïos of Samos and his crew were driven by a storm beyond the Pillars of Hercules to Tartessos, where they traded their goods at a great profit with the local inhabitants. With a tenth of their profit, they made a votive gift for the Heraion at Samos (Hdt. 4.152).

Tartessos encompasses the modern lower Guadalquivir Valley and the region around Huelva. It is associated with Phoenician and Greek trading ventures. Huelva, Cadiz and Cordoba form a vast triangle, within which many sites thrived. They were situated in rich agricultural country, and were central to the transport of minerals through maritime, fluvial and land routes (Gras, Roillard and Teixidor 1989, 102). The EIA sites at the nether part of the Guadalquivir all have Phoenician finds accompanied by imitations and local handmade ceramics (Schubart 1982, 209). Graves from Cabezo de la Joya in Huelva show a rich array of imports such as bronze tripods, vessels and plates, as well as ivory artefacts, together with local ceramics indicating that these are local Tartessian burials. This is in contrast to purely Phoenician graves in Trayamar and Almunecar. The earliest Phoenician settlements are dated to the 8th and 7th century (ibid.).

An early Phoenician site was Gadir (Cadiz). The Tartessian settlements on the bay of Gadir received their first Phoenician imports about 770-760 (Aubert 221-2). It had a temple of Melqart on the island of Kotinoussa. A proto-Aeolian limestone capital from the 8th/7th century BCE found there is the only piece of monumental religious architecture known from Phoenician colonies on the Iberian Peninsula (ibid. 230).

The permanent Phoenician settlements are rather late, whereas early finds associated with the Phoenicians all come from local settlements and trading places under Phoenician influence (Schubart 1982, 212). Neither in Malaga have finds been recovered to prove an early date (the 8th/7th century) for permanent settlements. The earliest finds are Phoenico-Punic, from the 6th century (ibid. 215). The Phoenician site Toscanos has yielded Protocorinthian kotylai dated to the 8th/7th century, in a building context dating the settlement to about 750 BCE (ibid. 217).

Andalucía attracted prospectors and merchants. At a site like Chinflon, on the Rio Tinto, where copper had been exploited since the end of the 9th to the beginning of the 7th century, no Phoenician imports or oriental influences are in evidence (Gras, Roillard and Teixidor 1989, 102). At Cerro Salomón in the Rio Tinto area, indigenous extraction of metal is attested from the 7th century, at the same time as the first traces of a Phoenician presence appear in the region (Aubert 1993, 238).

The connection of Toscanos, Almunecar and Chorreras to the commercial function in relation to the metals of the interior is dubious (Aubert 1993, 251). The majority of these Phoenician enclaves emerged between 750 and 720 BCE. Its Phoenician pottery correlates with Tyrian pottery of the 8th century (strata III and II at Tyre). At Toscanos, large residential houses have been excavated (ibid. 259). In the stratum Toscanos III (700 BCE), a warehouse or repository for merchandise has been excavated, as well as amphorae and vessels for storage and transport (ibid. 261). Trade in oil or wine with the hinterland from the second half of the 8th century is therefore probable. Murex shells have been found in Almunecar, Toscanos and Morro de Mezquitilla. There is evidence of fishing and farming (ibid. 264). Carefully built tombs contain several generations of burials (ibid. 270-1).

All in all, only seven Phoenician sites (eight with Cadiz) on the Iberian south-coast may be dated to the 8th/7th century, i.e. definitely earlier than the Greek settlements on the peninsula. The interests of the Phoenicians seem to have been ore, as the written sources tell us. In Toscanos there are finds of slag-mounds and metallurgical installations such as simple and double vents, which indicate smelting activities. The Phoenicians also seem to have made purple dye at the site, attested by finds of murex-shells. The settlements seem to have had a solid economic basis in farming and cattle-raising, which also fits the choice of areas for settlement. Remnants of barns for cattle have been found, as well as evidence for the cultivation of fields. The Phoenicians had a technology hitherto unknown to the local inhabitants, like dyeing with the murex-secrete, and making pottery on a flying top. Trade formed only a part of the economic basis of these settlements on the Iberian south-coast. The different settlements were all engaged in a range of different activities; no establishment produced only one product (Schubart 1982, 230; Gras, Roillard and Teixidor 1989, 65-7).

Olives were perhaps imported by the Phoenicians; their use in Iberia was at any rate encouraged by the Phoenicians, as is evident from local imitations of Phoenician amphorae of the 7th/6th centuries, probably for oil transport (Gras, Roillard and Teixidor 1989, 74).

From this analysis, it would seem like the Phoenicians encountered by the Greeks in the west were not independent entrepreneurs, but part-time farmers engaged in exchange of

metals with the indigenous population, in addition to their own mining and smelting activities. Some were professional seafarers, of course, but the metal-trade did not form an independent economic sector. It was combined with other activities and economic strategies

4.3 Literary evidence

The literary evidence will hopefully provide insights into the motivations for Phoenician activities abroad, and make it possible to reconstruct the mechanisms behind Phoenician trade. Also, written evidence may provide information on the relationship between Phoenicians and other Mediterranean peoples, the Greeks in particular.

4.3.1 Wen-Amon

In an Egyptian story,³⁰ an interesting picture is given of economy and transactions between Egypt and the Levant in the late 20th dynasty, i.e. early 11th century BCE. The priest Wen-Amon went to buy timber in Byblos for the ceremonial barque of Amon-Ra in the temple at Karnak. Under way, the means for the transaction was stolen and in Byblos the prince Zeker-Ba'al refused to talk to him. But through the intervention of a possessed youth, who uttered a prophecy in favour of the messenger of Amon, the prince changed his mind and was willing to negotiate. The king is angry, because Wen-Amon has come without letters or dispatches. He mentions one Warkatel, who supposedly lives in Egypt and is in established trade contacts with ships from Sidon, and asks why Wen-Amon has made no arrangement with him. As Wen-Amon lacks credentials and means of payment, he must convince the prince of supplying the timber for free. He refers to the hereditary responsibility of the princes of Byblos to supply this for the temple. The prince, however, demands something in return: Because when of old the Pharaoh sent for the wood, he also filled the storehouses of Byblos with all kinds of riches. As he is not the servant of the Pharaoh, the Egyptians must pay. Wen-Amon answers that he is indeed the servant, namely the servant of Amon, who has created all lands, and that he is stationed there to carry on the commerce of the Lebanon with Amon, its lord. The blessing of Amon is payment enough.

After a giving of some gifts from Egypt, the transaction was fulfilled and the timber was felled. Zeker-Ba'al says he has done his part like his father had done, even though Wen-Amon has not fulfilled his part, as was the tradition. Wen-Amon says that this time is different, as he is the messenger of Amon-Ra, and that he should rather bless himself for the

³⁰ For a translation see "The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia" in *ANET*, Princeton, N.J. 1969, 26-29

opportunity to do him a favour. He should erect a stela and write on it how he provided the timber for the barque of Amon, in order to ask for a long life from the god.

The exchange of timber and Egyptian goods evidently took the form of the fulfilment of a religious obligation to the temple at Karnak.

4.3.2 Assyrian royal inscriptions

The Phoenician city-states are frequently mentioned in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076) tells in an inscription how he came to get cedar for the temples of An and Adad, conquering Amurru and receiving tribute or gifts from Byblos, Sidon and Arwad. This was about 1100 (Klengel 1992, 185; Grayson 1976, 26-27.). Ashurnasirpal II (883-859) received tribute from Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and Arwad, the cities not being captured. He commemorated the event on a stela on Mount Amanus (Klengel 1992, 195). As tribute he received precious metals, luxurious fabrics, exotic animals, precious wood and ivory. He also cut precious wood on Mount Amanus (Grayson 1979, 143). Among the envoys invited to the inauguration of new buildings in Kalhu, mentioned on the “Banquet Stela”, are Tyre and Sidon (Klengel 1992, 195; Grayson 1979, 176).

During the destructions of Shalmaneser III (858-824) in the campaign against Haza’el of Damascus (841), the rulers of Tyre, Sidon and Israel sent their tribute. Their gifts are represented on the bronze bands of Balawat (Klengel 1992, 199). The accompanying inscriptions read: “I received the tribute of the ships of the men of Tyre and Sidon” (Luckenbill 1926, 225). The products are silver, gold, tin, bronze and purple wool (Michel 1949, 267 n. 7). Once more, in 838, Shalmaneser III attacked Damascus, and received the gifts from Tyre, Sidon and Byblos (Klengel 1992, 200; Luckenbill 1926, 205-206).

A king of Tyre whose name is lost paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727) during the campaign against Arpad (742-740), which was triggered by the revolt of Sardurri of Urartu (743). The tribute included iron, elephant hide, ivory, purple wool and products of the land in large quantities (Luckenbill 1926, 272-3). The Syrian territories were integrated into Assyria as provinces under Assyrian administration. King Elulaios/Luli of Tyre preserved the independence of his city-state (Klengel 1992, 223-5).

Sennacherib (704-681) campaigned in Syria, and he attacked the Phoenician cities in 701 (Klengel 1992, 227). He tells how Luli, the king of Tyre and Sidon, fled before him into the midst of the sea and died there. Sennacherib placed Tuba’alu (Ethbaal) on the throne instead. Then he imposed a heavy tribute on the Phoenician cities, and had them deliver it unto his presence (Luckenbill 1927, 118-119).

Esarhaddon (680-669) attacked Phoenicia, and established his own port, Kar-Esarhaddon, in the vicinity of Sidon. Ashurbanipal (668-627) received tribute from the Phoenicians (Klengel 1992, 229). After the breakdown of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II took control of the Phoenician cities in competition with Egypt, marking the end of the independence of the mainland Phoenician cities (ibid. 223).

Economic relations between Phoenician cities and Assyria were characterised by compulsory tribute and the delivery of luxury goods. Exchange was sporadic, and prompted by military campaigns or imposed as punitive measures against political unrest.

4.3.3 The *Odyssey*

The Phoenicians act as traffickers and travellers in the Homeric 8th century. They are encountered a couple of times by Odysseus, and have a wide-ranging sphere of action. Odysseus claims to have come to Ithaca from Crete as a passenger on board a Sidonian ship (Od.13.271-286). Another time, he was taken from Egypt to Phoenicia and entertained as a guest in the house of a rich merchant. After a while, the Phoenician insisted he needed assistance on a journey to Libya, whereas he actually intended to sell Odysseus into slavery. But off Crete they suffered shipwreck and Odysseus drifted to Thesprotia (Od.14.280-315). Phoenician traders sold Eumaios, the swineherd of Odysseus' father Laertes, as a slave. He was actually a prince, but was kidnapped by a runaway serving-woman who fled with some visiting Phoenicians (Od.15.414-483).

A rather different view of the Phoenicians is given when Telemachos, the son of Odysseus, and his companions visit Menelaos in Sparta. Menelaos shows them the treasures he gathered on his extensive travels back from Troy (Od.4.71-91).³¹ These were probably gifts.³² He gives a golden-rimmed silver bowl he had received from the hospitable Sidonian king Phaidimos to Telemachos as a parting gift (Od.4.611-619; 15.111-119).

Concerning trade, Odysseus is insulted by Euryalos the Phaiakaeon for being a trader, plying the seas on the lookout for gain. The type of the greedy trader is contrasted with the honourable sportsman, and is incompatible with an elite lifestyle (Od.8.159-164).

The Homeric view of the Phoenicians is split; they are both greedy merchants and members of a wealthy elite, with whom the Greeks have ties of friendship.

³¹ For eight years he had roamed the Mediterranean. On his journeys he gathered all kinds of treasures, which he characterises as “means of living” (Od. 4.71-92). The phrase for this tour of treasure-gathering is *polyn bioton synageirōn hēlōmēn*, i.e. “roaming about collecting much means of living” (Od.4.90-91).

³² In Egypt, Menelaos and Helen received precious gifts of gold and silver from the king and queen (Od.4.123-132).

4.3.4 Hesiod

Hesiod's *Works and Days* is negative to sea-borne trade. Good people are blessed with abundance, and may live off their own land. They never have to enter a ship (*Erga*. 229-6). The farming community should help each other. The ideal is one of balanced reciprocity: Give to him who gives, but do not give to him who does not (*dōmen, hos ken dō, kai mē dōmen, hos ken mē dō*) (*Erga*. 341-63). But sea-borne trade was of course not unknown. Hesiod's father had tempted the waves in his youth, and there are some advice concerning sailing among the farmer's wisdom. He advises his brother Perses to take only a part of his goods with him for trading, for fear of shipwreck, but urges him to take along enough to make a good profit (*kerdos*) (*Erga*. 617-693).

4.3.5 Book of Kings I; Ezekiel

In the Old Testament, Phoenicians and their cities are frequently mentioned. Hiram I of Tyre (c. 969-936) started a joint trading venture with David and Salomon to Ophir (I Kings 9:26-27). The Phoenicians traded wood and expert workmen for agricultural products with the Israelites (I Kings 5:6-12), and Hiram I received Israelite settlements (I Kings 9:10-14).

The most extensive description of the international trading partners of Tyre is found in Ezekiel (Ez. 27.9-25). The mode of trade is exchange of luxuries. Apart from gems, incense and other purely luxury commodities, cloth and fabrics are mentioned, as well as livestock, wheat, wine and diverse metals. The city is described as a ship, whose constituent elements come from all over the Levant and Egypt.

4.4 Interpretations

The interpretation and discussions referred to below are ordered according to topics. They all concern the same basic problem, however; whether the Phoenician Mediterranean expansion may be described in terms of a capitalist imperial system of exploitation, or whether the Phoenician activities abroad were part of a greater cultural interaction between Mediterranean peoples. This is important to determine the possibilities for and eventual extent of Phoenician cultural interaction with the Greeks.

4.4.1 The concept of a market in pre-industrial societies

The works of Karl Polanyi is the basis for almost all subsequent treatments of economics in the Ancient World, whether scholars agree with his theses or not. Polanyi's main point is that the laissez-faire of the free trade world economy of the 19th century is a singular historical phenomenon, the likes of which is unknown in human history prior to modern times: The self-

regulating market system was derived from the principle of gain, a motive that only few societies in human history have acknowledged as valid (Polanyi 1944, 30).³³ A market system requires that the motive of gain substitutes that of subsistence. All transactions are turned into money transactions, and all income must derive from the sale of something or other. This system must be allowed to function without outside interference. A market economy is constituted by a self-regulating system of markets (ibid. 41-2).

This is in contrast to what is known of primitive or ancient societies, where the economy is submerged in social relationships. Material goods are valued according to how they safeguard one's social standing, social claims and social assets. This implies that the economic system is run on non-economic motives (Polanyi 1944, 46). Rather, order in production and distribution is ensured through the principles of reciprocity and redistribution (ibid. 47). Polanyi's point is that all economic systems, up to the end of feudalism in Western Europe, were organised either on the principles of reciprocity or redistribution, or householding, or some combination of the three. Markets played no important part in the economic system (ibid. 54-5). Markets are meeting-places of long-distance trade, and are not essentially competitive. Trade originated in an external sphere unrelated to the internal organisation of the economy, as a result of the geographical location of goods (ibid. 58).³⁴ From more or less hostile encounters or robbery, the transition to peaceful barter may take two directions; exchange between strangers and locals on the spot in the form of barter, or a momentary peace, as in "silent trading" of the African Bush, where mutual trust and confidence is established. This may evolve into markets for external trade (ibid. 59). But external markets differ from local or internal markets in their essence of being an act of carrying, prompted by the absence of goods in a region. Such trade may be termed complementary, and need not imply competition (ibid. 60).

This is in contrast to a market economy, where production and distribution of goods will depend upon prices. This self-regulating mechanism ensures order in the production and distribution of goods (Polanyi 1944, 68). For a self-regulating market to function, society must be institutionally separated into an economic and a political sphere. All elements of industry, including labour, land and money, must be part of the market economy. This implies the subordination of the substance of society, i.e. the people and their natural surroundings, to

³³ Market society emerged in England, and was fully established after the Industrial Revolution, during the first half of the 19th century (Polanyi 1944, 30). Market laws can only function where a self-regulating market exists (ibid. 38).

the laws of the market (ibid. 71). Labour, land and money must be organised in markets if a market economy is to exist, i.e. they must become, or be at least described as, commodities (ibid. 72).³⁵

Thus, the emergence of a market economy in the Mediterranean Iron Age must be explained, it is not sufficient to presuppose its existence as a natural phenomenon. Neither is a motivation for gain in economic transactions a natural given in human affairs. It is a fallacy to suppose that ancient economies work in ways similar to our own, because the workings of modern economy are the results of specific historical circumstances and developments which may not be presupposed for ancient societies.

Early trade is dominated by import interest; at getting goods from a distance (Polanyi 1992 [1957], 41). Exchange is characterised by its two-sidedness, but trade can be further differentiated into three types: Gift trade, administrative trade, and market trade (ibid. 44). Administered forms of trade, i.e. trade involving more or less formal treaties, take place in ports of trade (ibid. 45).

Marshall Sahlins (1972) attempts to describe the principles of value in pre-industrial societies without the use of supply-and-demand mechanisms. Partnership trade is the rule in external markets; transactions take place between trade friends and trade kinsmen. These relationships stipulate economic equity and going rates (Sahlins 1972, 280). Exchange value does not vary according to supply-and-demand ratios; rates tend to remain stable in the short run, and only adjust in the long run (Sahlins 1972, 295). The competitive mechanisms by which supply and demand are understood to determine price in the market place do not exist in primitive trade. Formal market theory implies a double competition, i.e. both a two-sided competition between sellers over buyers, and between buyers over sellers, pushing prices toward equilibrium. In a market economy, all parties in question have access to each other as well as full knowledge of the market (ibid. 297). Trade between communities of different tribes is the exact opposite, because internal relations of kinship and amity stand against the

³⁴ “External trade is, originally, more in the nature of adventure, exploration, hunting, piracy and war than of barter. It may as little imply peace as two-sidedness, and even when it implies both it is usually organized on the principle of reciprocity, not on that of barter.” (Polanyi 1944, 59).

³⁵ This was achieved in 19th century Europe. A competitive labour market, automatic gold standard and international free trade are the three tenets upon which *laissez-faire* depends, and without which a free market cannot function. Following legislation in the middle of the 19th century these prerequisites were achieved in England, but the free market demanded a self-regulating market on a world scale to function (Polanyi 1944, 138). This was no natural development; *laissez-faire* was enforced by the state, and demanded a central bureaucracy to handle the new administrative tasks of the state (ibid. 139). Continuous, centrally organised and controlled interventionism was necessary to maintain the free market (ibid. 140). Likewise, the international finance system of the 19th century was impossible to maintain without gunboats to enforce payment when necessary (ibid. 207).

competition required by the business model. No man can have honour and profit in his own camp. The traffick goes between particular pairs; social relations connect up “buyers” and “sellers” (ibid. 298). The nearest approach to open-market trading would be a kind of auctioning, involving competition within the demand party only (ibid. 299).³⁶

In partnership trade, rates are set by social tact; by the diplomacy of economic good measure appropriate to a confrontation between comparative strangers.³⁷ Peace during the transaction cannot be guaranteed by any external Sovereign Power, but is secured by extension of sociable relations to foreigners; trade-friendships or trade-kinship and by the terms of exchange itself (Sahlins 1972, 302). The rate of exchange takes on functions of a peace treaty, the most tactful strategy being economic good measure. There is a tendency to overreciprocate in intergroup encounters (ibid. 303).³⁸

Scholars tend to use colonial terms to describe the relationship between Phoenicians and Tartessians. In an analysis of structural violence in imperialism, Johan Galtung (1972) states that between two interacting parties, a divide will develop and widen, because the use each of the parties have of the other will become increasingly asymmetrical. The most important question is who profits the most (Galtung 1972, 40-1). Galtung claims his model is valid regardless of whether one discusses a barter economy or a monetary economy. The central term is asymmetric interaction, or unequal exchange, with its three phases of robbery, trinket trade and continued exploitation through the development of an asymmetry within the peripheral community itself. This situation is perpetuated through feudalism; the peripheral nation or community is tied to a centre and to that centre only, in an asymmetrical relationship of providing raw materials and buying back finished products (ibid. 41-3).

The exchange relations between Phoenicians, Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples were not governed by market-laws, because it was no possibility of a market economy at the time. The exchange of goods was embedded in relations of cultural interaction which countered economic imperialism and exploitation. The traders had to settle for a prolonged

³⁶ Cf. the Argive women and the Phoenicians in Hdt.1.1.: *Tautas [tas gunaikas] stasas kata prumnēn tēs neos ōneesthai tōn fortiōn tōn sfi ēn thumos malista*, i.e. “they [the women] stood by the prow of the ship, and began to bargain for the wares they liked the most”, *ōneomai* meaning “offer to buy, bargain or bid for a thing” (Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon).

³⁷ “The guiding principle of “generosity” should give the agreed rate some resemblance of *the* equilibrium i.e., of supply/demand” (Sahlins 1972, 302).

³⁸ Granovetter and Swedberg (1992) argue against Sahlins’ thesis of the absence of supply and demand in pre-industrial societies, that prices in pre-industrial societies are determined by a mixture of social influence and demand-supply (Granovetter and Swedberg 1992, 12). But the point is that supply-demand is the theoretically sole mechanism behind prices in a market economy, whereas exactly a mixture of supply-demand and social influence is what makes it necessary to study pre-industrial economies in substantivist terms; Sahlins’ point in the first place.

period of time; they were few in number, and needed the protection and help of the local inhabitants.

4.4.2 Centre and periphery – the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean³⁹

In an oft-cited article, Susan and Andrew Sherratt (1993) offer a model for Iron Age economic developments consisting of a world-system that evolved from the 10th century onwards, involving and integrating increasing numbers of widespread communities. Central to their hypothesis is the dissociation of trade in highly valued goods from the state, giving free reins to private entrepreneurs (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 361). Temples took over the leading role of palaces as symbols of civic unity, and merchant enterprise became the new form of trade. This in turn transformed communities, making ethnicity a new and important category in the face of competition and rivalry between trading peoples. This is clear in areas of rival colonisation and expansion, and found an instrument in the fixation of language offered by the widespread adoption of the alphabetic script (ibid. 362). Long-distance intervention linked existing exchange-cycles along the Mediterranean into a world-system. The responses of the concerned areas resulted in local differentiation of economic activity that created complementary zones of different types of production and regional competition (ibid. 363): In the 8th century, Cypro-Phoenician bronze bowls and lyre-player seals are found from the Levant to Italy. This contrasts with the distribution of 7th century Phoenician bronze jugs and orientalising bowls in gold or silver, which are not found in Greece, but are found in the west and the east Mediterranean. Sherratt and Sherratt take this as evidence for the Greeks preferring local products to exotic goods, and excluding the Phoenicians from the trade routes across the Aegean (ibid. 370).

The trade system originated in the Levant in the 10th and 9th centuries, as a search for metals and other raw-materials in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea with subsequent establishment of a system of colonies. These were necessary to provide raw-materials for the production of export goods in the metropoleis as well as providing markets abroad (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 364).⁴⁰

³⁹ For a synopsis of the different phases of the developments discussed here, see fig. 1.

⁴⁰ Luxury goods from the Levant are evident from Lefkandi, and pottery travelled in the opposite direction (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 365). The earliest evidence for Phoenician settlement on Crete is a tri-columnar shrine at Kommos, dating to the later 9th century. The Phoenician presence seems to have ceased by the mid-eight century. Evidence for eastern craftsmen on Crete comes from objects from the Idaean cave and at Knossos (Boardman 1990, 184-5).

The 8th century saw the beginning of Neo-Assyrian expansion creating a number of secondary state foundations on its periphery. Exchange between the Aegean and the Levant was intensified, resulting in the Greek adoption of many orientalising traits in the arts, mythology, religion and sciences. The international sanctuaries of the Greek world lie at nodal points on the maritime routes, and the adoption of oriental traits in Greek culture was possible through these multicultural interfaces (ibid. 367). Colonies in the west were initiated in this period, and sites like Pithekoussai reveal the polyethnicity of such settlements (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 368). Superior technology and capital-concentration enabled the colonists to exploit local exchange circles (ibid.369).

In the 7th century Levantine finds are scarce in Greece in comparison with earlier periods. Local production may have replaced imports, or ethnic considerations may have excluded Levantines from trade with Greek poleis. The Assyrian expansion may have prompted further exploitation of foreign resources by Phoenician merchants, and Greek armed conflicts created a demand for metals, resulting in animosity and competition (ibid. 370).

In conclusion, the authors claim that Phoenician vessels were probably the largest in the Mediterranean until the late 7th century. They utilised silver as a medium of exchange, and had an advanced urban economy including slavery⁴¹ and labour-intensive manufacture of textiles and perfumes. They met with Mediterranean communities of different cultural levels in temples and sanctuaries in their trading diaspora. These meetings resulted in the transformation of Mediterranean cultures (ibid. 375).

Partly in response to the article of Sherratt and Sherratt (1993), Ian Morris formulated some thoughts on the concept of “negotiated peripherality”, originally an idea of P. Nick Kardulias (1999) (Morris 1999). The point is that the periphery in the world-systems theory terms of a core-periphery relationship is no passive victim of history, but to a certain extent determines its response to foreign impulses and economic changes. The case for his study is Iron Age Greece and its relation to the Near East. The evidence is finds of imports from the Near East in Greek graves and sanctuaries. Between 1000, when finds are scarce, to 800 when finds are abundant, differences in the reception of such imports is evident, as is the ambiguity towards the east reflected in Archaic poetry from the 7th and 6th century (ibid. 63). The question is whether these changes may be seen as the contraction and expansion of one Near Eastern world-system, as an extension of the core-periphery relationship between Assyria and the Levant in the Iron Age.

⁴¹ Slavery is hardly a feature of an advanced urban economy, since slaves don't represent much buying power. Unfree labour is a feature of redistributive economies.

Morris argues that the variations in finds of orientalia from Greek graves are not only caused by availability due by Near Eastern economic expansion, but also reflect inner Greek ideological developments. 10th century graves in the Aegean seem to belong to an elite representing itself as internally egalitarian. Most graves contain only a few pots and one or two iron objects (Morris 1999, 71). At first hand, the evidence points to a sharp decline of trade shortly before 1000, but occasional bronze finds show that contact with the outer world had not ceased. The exclusion of imported artefacts from graves was a decision made by the buriers, negotiating their relation to the Near East. The differences from Attica (iron pins) to Lefkandi (bronze fibulae) clearly illustrates that Greek burial customs were more than passive effects of larger forces (ibid. 72). These differences may be interpreted in light of the Hesiodic Races of Metal (Erga.106-200), the race of Iron competing with the race of Heroes. The contrast between the finds of the very rich double burial at Lefkandi dated to ca. 1000-950 and some two hundred 10th century graves explored elsewhere, which fit the pattern of replacing exotica and valuables with local products and iron objects, makes Morris see an attempt at heroisation and return to the past in the burials at Lefkandi, especially those of the apsidal house (Morris 1999, 73).

Whereas the Sherratts attributed early finds of exotica at Lefkandi to its favourable position on a Phoenician trading route after metals from Laurion and Thasos (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 366), Morris stresses that this explanation is insufficient facing the differences in distribution of foreign goods in Greece (Morris 1999, 76). He argues that there was competition and disagreement over the new availability of exotic goods, both within and between communities. Embracing the new imports would mean a denial of the conditions for the race of Iron; the 10th century elite ideology of an inward-turned, homogenous ruling class (ibid.). From 825 to 800 onwards, graves turn generally poorer and simpler, even though the access to foreign imports was better than ever. The expansion of the Near Eastern economic system was thus shaped partly by the reactions and negotiations of the periphery (ibid.77-78).

The world-system of the Sherratts is tempered by Morris' analysis of local reactions to the availability of foreign goods. This shows that the increasing interaction in the Mediterranean must be analysed in terms of communication and cultural interaction, not only as an increase in imports and exports.

4.4.3 "Peer polities" and pilgrimage

Colin Renfrew proposes a theory of interaction and evolution based on the political and cultural interaction between structurally and dimensionally similar political units, or peer

polities (Renfrew 1996). The idea is that at a certain stage in the political development of a region, autonomous political units sharing more or less the same culture exist in interaction with each other without a single, unified jurisdiction controlling the units (ibid. 116). There is no single hegemonial power as yet, but at the same time the communities compete with each other in many fields, most conspicuously on common ground such as interregional sanctuaries and during athletic or artistic festivals. Renfrew argues that such interaction is not restricted to a specific kind of society; the model is based on autonomous polities in their relation to similar polities, not their state of internal development. The polities share the same structured symbolic systems (ibid. 118).

Apart from the similarities determined by the environment, specific structures and symbolic systems can be attributed to interaction with a high degree of certainty, and it is here that the model may prove useful (Renfrew 1996, 121). The emphasis is on the process of interaction, not analysis of endogenous and exogenous factors as such. Change is analysed as emerging from the assemblage of interacting polities on a regional level. This is in contrast to the diffusionist idea of a core dominating a periphery (ibid. 121-124).

Renfrew demonstrates how different situations of interaction, such as warfare and competitive emulation, encourage political hierarchisation and cultural development (Renfrew 1996, 126). Besides competition, there is the process of symbolic entrainment, i.e. the tendency of polities to adopt symbolic systems of more developed polities when this does not conflict with their own system (ibid. 127). Even though this is often accompanied by an increased flow of goods, trade is not the most significant factor in promoting structural transformations (ibid. 129).

An increased flow of goods between Greece and the Near East is attested from the 8th century. Phoenician and Egyptian products are found virtually in all parts of the Mediterranean by Late Geometric times. Also North Syrian products have reached the Mediterranean (ivories, lyre player seals). Important is the distribution of metalwork from North Syria, Assyria and Urartu (Boardman 1990, 179-80). These are found as votive gifts in Greek sanctuaries, and at Olympia the non-Greek votives are 23% of the total, at Samos 85% of the total.⁴² In the sanctuaries to Hera Akraia and Hera Limenia by Corinth, Phoenician finds make out 74%, "Oriental" 0,5%, of the foreign votives, the total percentage of foreign

⁴² Of these, one quarter may be judged to come from North Syria or beyond (ibid. 180). In the Thessalian sanctuary to Artemis Enodia in Pherai, only 2% of the votives were foreign, of these 2, 6% coming from Phoenicia and 5, 2% coming from Phrygia (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, 217 Abb.1).

finds compared to local not being available from the current state of publication (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, 225-28 and Abb.11).⁴³

Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier (1985) states that imports of orientalia to Samos most probably began in Late Geometric. The percentage of non-Greek far out-sizes Greek non-local votives, of these the Phoenician are 9, 5 %, North Syrian 7, 4% (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, 236 and Abb. 18). All, in all, Egyptian, Cypriot and Oriental votives make out almost two thirds of the Samian votives of the 8th/7th century (ibid. 242). When one examines the foreign votives of the Samian Heraion, it becomes clear that it was a sanctuary which attracted visitors from the whole known world, from Iberia to Persia, and Caucasus to Egypt (ibid. 243).

The interaction model of Renfrew may explain the finds of foreign votives in Greek sanctuaries: They were common ground for cultural interaction. Different from settlements which are believed to have had a composite population, such shared sanctuaries may have been points where contacts were established initially.

4.4.4 Colonists or traders?

In a recently published article, Hans Georg Niemeyer (2002) raises criticism against the theory that Phoenician trade in metals was an extension of Neo-Assyrian imperialism and demand for tribute (cf. Lamprichs 1995, 384). His rejection of the theory is based on the fact that the Phoenician “colonies” along the coast of North Africa, Sicily and Sardinia were all established well before the Assyrian expansion reached the Levant, making the connection between Assyrian demand for metal and the Phoenician expansion unlikely (Niemeyer 2002, 188). Finds of luxuries of oriental origin in graves and sanctuaries in the Aegean from the 10th to 9th century onwards are taken as evidence for Phoenician presence (ibid. 180). Rather than a function of Assyrian imperialism, Niemeyer sees the permanent Phoenician settlements and factories in the Mediterranean as an attempt to secure their trading routes in the Mediterranean, in reaction to Greek competition which sets in with the beginning of Greek settlements in the West;⁴⁴ as evidence Niemeyer quotes the traditional foundation date for the Greek colony at Syracuse, in 734 BCE (ibid. 188).

⁴³But see the criticism of Boardman: The percentage of Phoenician finds is too high, because individual beads are counted as separate finds, although they may have belonged to the same necklace (Boardman 1990, 181 and n. 12, 187). Phoenician finds are predominantly amulets and seals, as well as jewelry. These objects are probably trinkets bought as votives abroad by locals, not necessarily brought by foreigners (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, 230 and Abb. 12). In Olympia, oriental votives are 12, 8% of the foreign finds, among them 34 North Syrian bronze-vessels (ibid. 231 and Abbn. 13 and 17).

⁴⁴Increased economic competition and animosity between Greeks and Phoenicians as a result of their colonial ventures is not evident from the excavated sites. There is no evidence of Phoenician installations on the sites

The Phoenicians settled on Sardinia and Sicily, as did the Greeks, and were attracted by metal ore in Etruria. Orientalia are found in the Euboian colony on Pithekoussai, indicating exchange between the expatriates (Niemeyer 2002, 181-2). Further west were the rich metal deposits on the Iberian Peninsula. There is some evidence for a large Phoenician *enoikismos* on Huelva. In the 8th to 7th century, Phoenician settlements reached from Mogador in Northwest Africa over the Iberian coast to Sardinia, Sicily and Malta. But these are not to be taken as evidence for a colonial empire, being points of support and security along the transmediterranean waterways for the trade in metals and ore (ibid.183-4).

Niemeyer states that they were probably not planned as regular settlements. This is in contrast to the Greek settlements abroad, which were clearly agricultural settlements (Niemeyer 2002, 184). Niemeyer explains the postulated lack of agriculture from the societal structure of the Levantine metropoleis. He views them as palace-societies sending prospectors abroad.⁴⁵ From the lucrative trade rose a merchant aristocracy, evident in rich graves in Spain and North Africa. Common traits with Greek elites, such as a sympotic culture, evident through finds of drinking vessels, cauldrons, and ladles point to a multi-ethnic elite culture in the Mediterranean (ibid.186).

Schubart (1982), in her review of the Iberian sites, came to the conclusion that there were indeed farming activities and cattle-raising associated with the Phoenician settlements (Schubart 1982, 230). This point is important in order to define the Phoenician expansion. Only if they settled as farmers as well as traders, might it be termed a real migration.

Maria Eugenia Aubet (1993) argues that even though the Phoenician colonies of the central Mediterranean soon adopted Carthaginian traits, by establishing sanctuaries and sacred precincts, conquering territory and constructing a defensive system, this paradigm of colonial settlement was not followed further west. In Iberia, warehouses have been found, but no sacred precincts. The necropoleis are smaller, and the limited extent of the settlements

which later became Greek colonies (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 53 and 77, n. 1). No conflicts between Greeks and Phoenicians have been reported neither on Rhodes, nor Pithekoussai nor Pyrgi. Ancient commerce was a commerce of redistribution; the rare wrecks that have been found have had a heterogenic cargo (ibid. 79-80). Besides, neither "Greeks" nor "Phoenicians" can be considered economic units at this stage, being organised in separate, autonomous city-states.

⁴⁵ It is hard to understand why the political structure of the Levantine states should prevent permanent settlements abroad. What little is known of their social organisation bespeaks a monarchy wherein popular assemblies of all or some citizens had a degree of influence (EA 100, 1ff; ANET, 29; SAA 2 §5, 6-8; Ez. 27.8-9). The Greek adaptation of the Phoenician script bespeaks some permanence in the Phoenician settlements (or prolonged contact with individual Phoenician settlers) in order to make this transfer possible at all. The first known inscription in alphabetic Greek comes from Latium, dated to c. 775 BCE (Ridgway 1996, 87-97). This was common ground for both Phoenicians and Greeks.

indicates an initially transitory aspect of the original Phoenician population (Aubet 1993, 186).

The Phoenicians established themselves permanently on Sardinia, as the architecture suggests (Aubet 1993, 205). They were probably engaged in viticulture and olive cultivation (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 76). Phoenician settlers in Toscanos were involved in a variety of crafts, indicating that not all the population was involved in commerce (Aubet 1993, 266). Phoenicians in Iberia were not only involved in specialized production, but also devoted themselves to fishing and intensive crop and animal husbandry, directed towards economic self-sufficiency (ibid. 264-5). Family tombs (ibid. 270-1) and large houses probably belonging to family groups or wealthy individuals have been excavated at Toscanos (ibid.259), indicating the permanent settlement of a “specialized and highly qualified mercantile “bourgeoisie”” in Chorreras, Toscanos and Morro de Mezquitilla (ibid. 267). But Aubet concludes that the Phoenician settlements were not proper colonies, because they had no *chora*, or its own agricultural land. The Phoenicians presumably settled where there were harbour facilities, and an indigenous clientele with whom they could exchange merchandise (ibid. 278). The Phoenicians established commercial enclaves or centres for redistribution organised around a temple, a definition close to a port of trade (ibid. 279).

Indications of permanent settlements are explained as different aspects of the trading purpose of the Phoenician diaspora: Aubet divides the Phoenician (Tyrian) settlements into three types, or models: 1. The mercantile metropolis (Cadiz), which is a projection of Tyrian society and its economy (cf. the temple of Melqart). 2. Farming colonies (Toscanos, Almunecar, Morro de Mezquitilla), whose tombs indicate a mixture of mercantile oligarchy and landowners. Further examples are Sulcis and Tharros, where the fortifications indicate a wish to control agricultural and mining lands. 3. Aristocratic colony (Carthage), with appropriation of agricultural land and the establishment of permanent, fortified settlements (Aubet 1993, 282-3).

Michel Gras, Pierre Rouillard and Javier Teixidor ask whether it is possible to define Phoenician establishments exclusively by its commercial activities. On Sardinia and in Andalusia, the Phoenicians sought minerals and ore. Most Phoenician sites have an economic or commercial space around them defined by exchanged products. In addition there are orientalisising objects imitating imports, and local ceramics imitating Phoenician forms and decorations (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 69). They too, conclude that there is not enough evidence today for a Phoenician agrarian colonisation in Andalusia (ibid. 75). The initial objective of the majority of Phoenician establishments was commerce (ibid. 77).

Phoenician establishments do cover regions known for their mining resources: Cyprus, Sardinia and Andalusia; but this does not explain why the Phoenicians went to Utica, Carthage or Sicily (ibid. 97).

The evidence for farming-activities seems quite clear. It is difficult to understand how the Phoenicians otherwise fed themselves while staying abroad. They must have settled for some period of time, especially during the winter, when sailing was impossible. Trade and commerce was only one of several activities at these sites. The motivation for moving abroad may have been equally complex: Migration and material exchange, or trade, are interrelated phenomena.

4.4.5 Pirates, traders or capitalists?

Moses Finley viewed the Phoenicians as providers for the Greeks of all that that they obtained by peaceful means from the outside. The Phoenicians were a trading people, and whether or not they were motivated by gain was irrelevant to the Greeks, who were the passive participants in the operation (Finley 1978, 70).

Responding to Polanyi's idea of "trading peoples" involved in treaty trade rather than operating in a market economy (cf. Polanyi 1957 [1992], 42), Maria Eugenia Aubet (1993) discusses the idea of the emergence of new models of commercial organisation after the fall of the palatial economies around 1200 BCE (Aubet 1993, 81-91). The claim that Phoenician activity consisted basically in making profits and creating a demand in the quest for gain is confronted with the lack of evidence for an evolution in trading systems from a state controlled to a private mercantile enterprise in the 1st millennium. Private trade was more akin to piracy than to mercantile activity (ibid. 90-1). The system of exchange known from the Late Bronze Age continued among other economic practices (ibid. 108). Aubet proposes an explanation considering reciprocity as an exchange in which profits are sought and mutual trust between princes and merchants plays a part. The spheres of state and merchant trade merge (ibid. 117). Against the views of Polanyi and Finley, Aubet finds commercial exchange with no thought of profit very strange (ibid. 118).

Her model for the Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean focuses on Tyre. There were two great political institutions, the palace and the temple. These were united in the god Melqart, the king of the city (Aubet 1993, 119). The founding of a colony demanded the building of a temple to Melqart. This drew attention to the intervention of the monarchy in all

distant commercial activity (ibid. 130).⁴⁶ Aubet interprets the Melqart temple in Cadiz as an institution to ensure that the temple of Tyre and the monarchy were in charge of the commercial enterprise. The colony was converted into an extension of Tyre. The temple also guaranteed the right of asylum and hospitality, a prerequisite for conducting trade in foreign lands (ibid. 234).⁴⁷ Powerful commercial agents supposedly acted under orders from Tyre (Aubet citing Strabo 2:3, 4), and Gadir monopolised trade in the Mediterranean throughout the 7th century (Aubet 1993, 241).

According to Aubet, an increase in orientalisising objects in the La Joya necropolis is evidence that the Tartessian aristocracy was enriched through the silver trade (Aubet 1993, 238; so also Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 74-5). The Phoenicians established a colonial system of trade, by creating a local demand for luxury goods, and extracting valuable raw materials (ibid. 246). Some of the goods found in graves might have been prestige gifts, the reciprocal exchange of gifts thus facilitating access to the economic objectives of Phoenician trade. This exchange appears to be restricted to the privileged sector of Tartessian society. Aubet concludes that the Tartessians were exploited by the Phoenicians, who exchanged silver, copper and tin for wine, oil and perfumes. It was “a typical colonial situation, rather than one of developed trade” (ibid. 247).⁴⁸

Concerning private trade in the Neo-Assyrian empire, J. N. Postgate (1979) admits that “there is a most emphatic silence on this subject in the sources” (Postgate 1979, 206). But three or four passages may speak against a government trade monopoly, one of which concerns the Phoenicians: The Sidonians may bring down the timber from Mount Lebanon and do their work with it, but not sell it to the Palestinians or Egyptians (Postgate 1974, 390-93; 1979, 206).

Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor (1989) assert that there are no cuneiform texts to warrant the view that Phoenician trade was an Assyrian state enterprise. Rather, Assyrian kings seem to have encouraged the activities of individual merchants (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989,

⁴⁶ The evidence for this theory is the reports in Polybios, Diodoros and Arrianos of annual tribute from Phoenician settlements abroad to the god Melqart of Tyre (Aubet 1993, 131). Needless to say, all these sources are fairly late in view of the developments discussed here, which took place between the 9th and the 7th century.

⁴⁷ “In ancient trade, the protection of visitors to the market or place of exchange was guaranteed by a temple, built close by, which acted at times as an efficient financial intermediary or bank. The sanctuaries in antiquity were the first places for commercial transactions in a foreign country” (Aubet 1993, 234).

⁴⁸ This corresponds to Johan Galtung’s thesis of conflicting interests in the peripheries in imperialist systems, i.e. that a centre of a “central nation” deals with the centre of a “peripheral nation”. Changes in the peripheral nation due to contact with a central nation will be evident first and foremost in the centre of that peripheral nation, whereas the rest will remain unchanged or even deteriorate (Galtung 1972, 36-7).

81).⁴⁹ In the Homeric sources,⁵⁰ there are instances of the traditional hospitality that characterised the societal ideology of Near Eastern societies between the 15th and 13th centuries BCE, and also flourished in the world of archaic aristocracies of the beginning of the 1st millennium. The Phoenician merchants were not adventurers, but aristocrats acting on par with the petty kings of the Greek world (ibid. 105). Between the 10th and the 6th century, trade seems to have escaped from political power, and the Phoenician sovereigns no longer directed the activities in the Mediterranean. Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor claim the Phoenician expansion into the Occident seems to have been accompanied by a loss of control on part of the rulers of Tyre and Sidon, facing the emergence of a merchant class acting on their own account. Great tombs, dating to the 7th century, on Malta, Carthage, Almunecar and Trayamar are taken as evidence of this (ibid. 106; cf. Aubet 1993, 267 and 270-1). The merchant Warkatel in the Wen-Amon story, and the merchants in Od.14.287-98 and Od.15.414-28 are examples of these independent traders, representatives of a social category in progressive emancipation (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 106). Thus, there are two kinds of Phoenicians, those involved in state ventures abroad and private hucksters devoting themselves to piracy and slave-trade (ibid. 107).

Concerning Phoenician activities in the West, it was probably metal which lured the Phoenicians thus far from home. They did not contribute much technologically, however, as the indigenous population seem to have remained masters of the mining exploitation (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 103). The Phoenicians did not have colonies like the Greeks, but established *relais* to facilitate trade with the indigenous populations on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, the Iberian and African coast. The original cores of the Phoenician establishments were sanctuaries, which may have favoured transactions because they were considered neutral ground (ibid. 108).

Michael Sommer (2000) has a thoroughly formalist view of the Phoenicians. He sees the payment of tribute from Tyre to Assyria as part of the symbiotic balance between two dissimilar centres (Sommer 2000, 135). Assyria could not do without the Phoenician traders supplying them with raw materials and luxury items (ibid.) The relationship worsened, however, and Assyria sought other means to get what they needed (ibid.141-3). But the success of the Phoenician traders was guaranteed through their functional necessity, the

⁴⁹ Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727) allowed Sidonians to trade with wood from Mount Lebanon provided they did not sell it to the Egyptians. Sargon II (721-705) encouraged exchange between the Levantine coast and Egypt merchants (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 81).

⁵⁰ Od. 15.115-19; II.23.740-9

Assyrians thus granting them a special position in a time when most other Syrian cities were conquered (ibid. 147).

The Levant was the hub in a system of exchange of goods originating in the Early Bronze Age. The Phoenician trade was a continuity of this exchange, but was in a quantitative and qualitative sense a novelty. The changes from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age were due to demographic, ecological, political and social changes, which together brought about a structural transformation. The increase in goods-exchange was in part due to increasingly complex societies along the Mediterranean, and the Assyrian expansion (Sommer 2000, 230). Both led to increased demand for finished products; the Levant was no longer merely a provider of raw materials, but became a centre in its own right. Phoenicians were engaged in transit trade, and exploited fluctuating prices to obtain profits. Their economic strategy was similar to the Aristotelian *khrēmatistikē* (ibid. 231).

The lack of an agricultural hinterland to feed an increasing population in Phoenicia encouraged its inhabitants to engage in trade. Soon, this group attained a prominent social standing, as an elite of entrepreneurs. The profits of this trade were, according to Sommer, the material basis of Phoenician existence (Sommer 2000, 232-3). Individual traders of the 8th and 7th centuries were acting independent of temple or palace (ibid. 233).⁵¹ Sommer places the change from royal control of trade and exchange to private merchants in the 9th century. The collapse of the palaces, the introduction of iron and the introduction of the alphabetic script all facilitated the evolution of independent merchants. They profited from technical know-how, information and logistical resources rather than agriculture. The development was from trade in raw materials to trade in finished products to intermediate trade (ibid.234).

Sommer rejects the use of models based on reciprocity and gift exchange to understand the Phoenician economy of the Iron Age: Even though literary sources, like Wen-Amon, the Old Testament and Homer allow for interpretations of this kind, his claim is that these sources describe societies that either stand in a direct line to the Bronze Age (Egypt) or are too primitive to have a mercantile system (Greece, Israel). The Phoenician society, on the

⁵¹ Sommer quotes the treaty between Esarhaddon and Ba'al of Tyre as proof for the activities of individual Tyrian traders: If the ships of Ba'al or the people of Tyre (*GIŠ.MÁ ša mba-a-lu lu šá UN.MEŠ KUR.šur-ri*) founder off the coast, as much as is on board (*am-mar šá ina ŠÁ GIŠ.MÁ –ni*) shall belong to Esarhaddon, but the people shall be returned to their own country unharmed (SAA II, §5, 15-7 (= Parpola and Watanabe 1988)). To Sommer, this is a clear indication of private merchants involved in trade on par with the king: The people of Tyre have their own ships, like the king. But the treaty is formulated throughout as a treaty with the king, his family and the entire people of Tyre, young and old (*KUR.šur-ri gab-bi-šú TUR GAL*) (SAA II, §5, 1-3). That ships of the king and ships of the people are mentioned separately follows the structure of the formulation of the treaty as such. Besides, there is no explicit mention of the ships carrying merchandise, only the general "everything that is on the ship" (*gab-bu [...] am-mar šá ina ŠÁ GIŠ.MÁ –ni*) (cf. SAA II, §5, 15-7).

other hand, cannot be described in the terms used by the writers of these texts (Sommer 2000, 236).⁵² Sommer claims that the Phoenicians consciously exploited the principle of freely negotiable, competitive prices: The Phoenician long distance trade was thus characterised by the elements that, according to Polanyi, are essential to a market economy: Groups of suppliers and demanders, fluctuating prices, and a principle of competition. The market was the determinant of the social and economic development of Phoenician society. All economic sectors and the entire population were oriented according to the world market (ibid. 237).

Phoenician trade was in all periods a mixture of different economic strategies: Piracy, barter and exchange, combined with subsistence agriculture, fishing and crafts. The evidence for a separate economic sphere dominated by independent entrepreneurs is slight. The Phoenicians had permanent settlements abroad, and profit from trade was probably not sufficient or of the kind to feed both the merchants themselves and the inhabitants of the metropoleis.

4.5 Discussion

Concerning the mass-production of wares for sale, the archaeological evidence for Phoenician Iron Age cities is very meagre, the only site excavated with a specific view to the period being Sarepta. All other sites have severely disturbed Iron Age layers. Therefore, the theories of Sherratt and Sherratt and Sommer are difficult to verify.⁵³ Even though production of high quality goods for export is very likely, the extent of its significance for the domestic economy is impossible to assess from the archaeological evidence.

The dynamic force in Sherratt and Sherratt's thesis is the differentiation of economic activity into complementary zones of different types of production and regional competition as a response to Phoenician trade (cf. Sherratt and Sherratt, 363). This seems to indicate that local differences in production were determined by human initiative, and not by ecological factors. The zones of the world-system are defined in economic terms, according to their status relative to the "primary zone of capital- and labour-intensive manufacturing" (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 375). This element in the hypothesis, the capital concentration as basis for the colonial system, is exactly what must be proved. A functioning market economy demands the separation of the institutions regulating society into an economic and a political sphere (cf. Polanyi 1944, 71). Sherratt and Sherratt and Sommer claim that trade was emancipated from

⁵² Unfortunately, the sources that Sommer claims would more adequately describe the economic reality of Phoenicia do not exist. He therefore resigns to the available sources, since "die Quellen vermitteln bei richtiger Lesart durchaus Informationen" (Sommer 2000, 236).

the control of the palaces, and taken over by independent merchants (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 361; Sommer 2000, 233). But there is no ancient evidence for the necessary financial institutions that would make capital concentration effective.⁵⁴ The ancient world knew hoarding and greed, but lacked the necessary institutions for investment and speculation. There was neither a developed international credit-system nor law-courts to handle international trade relations. This makes a Phoenician economy based on their position as independent entrepreneurs in long-distance trade impossible.

An international trade system cannot function without the means to intervene on an international scale. Without gunboats to enforce the honouring of contracts and agreements, international trade had never been possible (Polanyi 1944, 207). If the Phoenicians did not have substantial garrisons in their settlements, there would be very few incentives for the natives to comply with their demands or wishes. The Phoenician vessels are not known to have been organised in a navy at this time. Iberia is at any rate out of reach from bases in the Levant. Intervention in any meaningful sense of the word would be impossible.

The presence of Phoenicians as permanent settlers in colonies abroad as well as being active seasonally as itinerant traders is far more likely, given the difficulties of travel and need for food and shelter along the coast. Trade is a surplus-phenomenon, not something the entire population of Phoenicia or the colonies could live off. The view of the Phoenicians as providers from outside the Greek world (cf. Finley 1978) is difficult to maintain, as long as there is evidence of Greek presence in the Levant from at least the 9th century onwards. The idea that Greeks were forever a passive part in interaction with Phoenicians is unnecessary, and does not explain the evidence. It does reflect, however, a wholesale adoption of aristocratic sentiments against petty trade in Homer. Not all Phoenicians were traders, even though these were the Phoenicians most Greeks were likely to meet.

It seems plausible that Cypriots, Phoenicians and Euboians inherited an exchange network once dominated by Canaanites and Mycenaeans. Relations between the Iron Age Cypriot kingdoms and the Greek islands probably developed as a result of contacts first established in the Bronze Age (Reyes 1997, 66). When one turns to the literary evidence (Wen-Amon, Homer), it becomes quite clear how older structures survive the Dark Age. Even though Aubet finds the notion of exchange without profit strange (Aubet 1993, 118), there are other conceivable motives for exchange than direct material profit: The prestige attributed to

⁵³The theory seems to be modelled on the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of the Spinning Jenny.

⁵⁴Temples may have acted as treasuries or banks, but interest rates on loans were not regulated by the laws of a free credit market.

excessive generosity will secure social standing, and promise future prosperity through the reciprocating of gifts.

The study of Ian Morris (1999) convincingly demonstrates the importance of detailed studies of interaction in order to understand the mechanisms behind exchange of goods and expansion of economic systems. It is a good illustration of the diversified responses to exchange, which cannot be described in economic terms alone. Contrary to the formalist view that every transaction has a view to material gain and profit, the Greek response to Near Eastern trade was different from region to region, and for reasons which are hard to explain from a profit-maximising perspective. Therefore, if the world-system theory is to be maintained, one has to take into consideration the whole range of cultural factors involved in a transaction.⁵⁵

Structural terminology similar to Johan Galtung's (1972) model of structural violence and imperialism is used to describe Phoenician trade (cf. Aubet 1993, 247), even though numbers for Phoenician trade is lacking completely, making statistical analyses impossible. The feudalism of a colonial system, i.e. that a peripheral community is restricted from any interaction with other peripheral communities or with another centre, is evidently not the case in Tartessos: Greek pottery is found along with Phoenician wares (Schubart 1982, 217), and Greek activities in Tartessos are evident from the literary sources (Hdt. 1.163). Also, the Tartessians themselves mined and smelted ore before the arrival of Phoenicians (Gras, Rouillard and Teixidor 1989, 102). There is little evidence to warrant a view that the Tartessians were exploited in a modern sense. They exchanged goods with foreigners, who eventually settled in Tartessos and established farming communities of their own. The overall effect on Tartessian society cannot be said to have been negative. The most important objection to the idea of overseas Phoenician imperialism, however, is one of communication. Galtung discusses the problem of means of communication for maintaining imperial control. In pre-industrial times, the only way to maintain an imperial system was through a massive,

⁵⁵Morris' thesis focuses on the internal differences in reactions to foreign imports, and does not deal with the establishment of contact with outsiders in the first place. The Near East is treated exclusively as a supplier of luxury goods for Greek elites. Confidence as a prerequisite for exchange is not discussed. Mark Granovetter (1992 [1985]), writing on the problem of embeddedness, states that the problem of trust in economic transactions has been solved by analysing the institutions which substitute trust, or by presupposing the presence of a general morality. Instead, the embeddedness argument stresses the role of concrete personal relations and structures (or "networks") of such relations in generating trust and discouraging malfeasance" (Granovetter 1992 [1985], 60). The study of exchange between the Near East and Greece should therefore not only involve the concrete value attributed to the goods themselves, but also the consequences of cultural interaction with foreigners and the nurturing or abandoning of trade-friendships.

colonial, military presence (Galtung 1972, 62). This has not been proved to be the case in Tartessos.

Colin Renfrew's case is the development of the Greek city-states, with their similarities in political and societal structure and common institutions such as the Olympic Games and the Oracle at Delphi (Renfrew 1996, 130-137). But the model might also be used to explain the interaction between Greeks and non-Greeks. As demonstrated above, interaction between Greeks and Phoenicians took place not only as an exchange of goods, but also on a religious and social level. The adoption of the Phoenician script demonstrates the high level of cultural exchange between Greeks and Phoenicians. The Orientalising Revolution in Greek art and mythology is an example of symbolic entrainment (cf. Burkert 1995; P. Morris 1992).

The story of Wen-Amon illustrates the complex nature of Phoenician trade, as part gifts and reciprocity between elites, as a hereditary exchange between the Pharaoh and the prince of Byblos, and perhaps part tribute. From the Egyptian side, the pious act of giving a votive gift to Amon is emphasised, but Zeker-Ba'al is not willing to let the timber go without a guarantee of some recompense. At the end, the prince seems to accept Wen-Amons interpretation of the purchase as a pious gift to Amon. It is difficult to decide whether this is a hard bargain coached in religious language, or an exchange of gifts gone wrong through the theft of Wen-Amons contribution to the exchange. At any rate, their disagreement is not concerning the market price for timber. The exchange of goods is embedded in the communications and prestige-exchange between elites, the priesthood at Karnak and the prince of Byblos. It is also an ancient agreed duty between Byblos and the Pharaoh. Lastly, it is in essence a consecration of a votive gift to an international sanctuary, the temple of Amon at Karnak.

The Assyrian sources seem quite clear on the Assyrian relations with Phoenicia. The coastal cities pay tribute as long as the Assyrian expansion has not yet reached Syria, and when Damascus is turned into a province, it became attractive to subdue the Phoenicians as well. The Assyrian empire expanded after the manner of most known empires: The degree of control and intervention varied with the distance from the imperial centre. The Assyrians had direct control over annexed provinces, whereas the vassal states on the periphery had relative autonomy. With the process of progressive consolidation, these too came under direct control. The central purpose of empire is expansion (cf. Geiss 1994, 33-5).⁵⁶ Interesting is the range of

⁵⁶ The expanding empire demanded further income from its periphery to maintain the symmetry between periphery and centre within Assyria itself. In the course of events, the status of the peripheral communities

Phoenician foreign activities revealed in the exotica they yielded as tribute. But it is no reason to suppose the Phoenicians were forced to seek foreign treasures facing Assyrian demands for tribute. They had initiated their travels abroad long before and independent of any external pressure.

Turning to the Old Testament sources, it is possible to reconstruct the network of Tyre's trading partners from Ezekiel (cf. Sommer 2000, 126-131). We are worse put to it to explain the exact mechanisms of the Phoenician trade. We know what Tyre received from its partners, and also roughly what they bartered back, but we do not know to what extent the city was dependent on such exchange. The trade in luxuries is emphasised, begging the question to what extent the trade actually involved, or indeed influenced the common populace. An elite with international contacts is no doubt attested; the complete reliance of the community on foreign trade is not. Besides, Ezekiel aims at describing fabulous riches and luxury, as a contrast to the suffering and humiliation God will heap on the Phoenician cities. He did not, unfortunately, write an economic history of Phoenicia.

Obviously, Hesiod's passages on trade are part of an ideological account of the hard-working farmer who never leaves his hearth and home. Incidentally he reveals that sea-borne trade was an alternative to starvation and dire need, but he is careful to present it as a desperate measure. Honour and profit are often conflicting social values. Besides, success was far from guaranteed. He urges Perses to take along enough to make a good profit (*kerdos*), but warns him of the storms at sea. Profit is obtained by exploiting the difference in local price levels by transporting goods from one peasant market to another.

The Homeric evidence also reveals the split view of trade and foreign contacts. The elite appreciated exotic goods, but seems to despise those who purvey them. The ideal is that of gift-exchange involving no profit, but it is evident that bargaining and trade occurred. Thus, goods for trade, gifts and votives were moved in overlapping circles of exchange. This is reminiscent of the Melanesian institution of the *kula*-ring, which is described in anthropological literature: The inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands carry valued objects from one island to the other in a clockwise direction; each islander involved has one partner on the other island with whom he exchanges objects. The objects are often valuable necklaces and armbands, preferably such as have belonged to important persons (Polanyi 1944, 50). A variant of the *kula*-ring also practiced on the Trobriand Islands, the *uvalaku*, closely resembles

changed; they were bound tighter to the Assyrian economy. Thus, they no longer delivered tribute in the form of luxuries and treasures, but had to provide supplies at a regular basis, administered through regional deputies (Lamprichs 1995, 397-8).

that of Menelaos' tour of the Mediterranean empty handed, gathering riches (*polyn bioton synageirōn hēlōmēn*) (Od.4.90-91). It involves travelling from one island to the other without any goods to trade at all, not even for food. The participants of the expedition do nothing but receive. But the gifts they receive are reciprocated next year, when the hosts come as guests in their turn (Mauss, 1950 [1995], 55-6). The similarities between Homeric society and Melanesian institutions have been pointed out frequently, and these further examples only demonstrates how unlike ancient economies are from the modern market economy. The reason for mentioning the uvalaku in connection with the Phoenicians is that Menelaos receives precious gifts from Phaidimos the Sidonian, parts of which are in turn given to Telemachos. This makes the Phoenician a member of the *kula*-ring of Menelaos.

4.6 Conclusion

When one studies the Phoenician expansion into the Mediterranean, it soon becomes clear how varied their relations with the local populations were. On Cyprus it is difficult to see any hegemonial status of the Phoenicians, much less an exploitative colonialism. The metal deposits on the island attracted other settlers as well, notably the Greeks, and the mining and smelting of ore generated exchange between coastal sites and the inner regions of the island. But the export of metal was only one side to the exchange between the Cypriots and the Levant. The network of contacts hailing back to the Amarnian and Mycenaean *koines*, i.e. the exchange systems between the Aegean, Anatolia, the Levant, Mesopotamia and Egypt of the Late Bronze Age, seem to have survived in some form into the Iron Age and beyond. Both literary and archaeological sources speak of an exchange of luxuries, as well as trade in foodstuffs and raw materials such as ore, in a system of more or less equal partners. The Phoenicians, Cypriotes and Greeks lived together on Cyprus in close relations with each other from the 10th century at least.

From the 9th century, finds at Euboia reveal a beginning trade between Phoenicians and Euboians. Grave-goods at Lefkandi reveal the prestige attributed to Oriental imports. What the Phoenicians wanted from the Euboians in return is not clear, and this has inspired the theory that those early relations between Greeks and Phoenicians were that of slave trade. The importance of chattel-slavery as such at this early stage is doubtful, given the abundance of other unfree or semi-unfree labour. From the literary sources the trade in slaves seems to be unorganised and ad-hoc.

These early contacts would later expand to Greek settlers in the Levant as well as Phoenicians living and working in Greek cities. Their common colonial movement into the

west, especially Sicily and Pithekoussai, resulted in exchange of skills and goods. The Greeks learned the alphabet from the Phoenicians in the 8th century (if not earlier), and their first inscriptions are of a literary nature, such as occasional poetry. They are found on Euboian colonial sites as well as on Euboia itself. There is evidence of a common elite culture in the Mediterranean, including poetry and wine drinking, indicating structural similarities between Phoenician and Greek culture. Elite exchange, rather than exploitation and oppression, seems to have been the rule in contacts between Greeks and Phoenicians.

From the many finds of Oriental goods in Greek sanctuaries, such as the Heraion on Samos, it seems like Phoenician pilgrimage to such sites was common. In general, the peoples of antiquity had few nationalist preferences when it came to religion, and rulers such as Croesus of Lydia and Midas of Phrygia were renowned for their rich gifts to Greek sanctuaries. As is evident from the story of Wen-Amon, too, trade in luxuries such as cedar-wood might take the form of a pious act. This adds a new dimension to Phoenician trade, namely the pious giving of votive gifts.

The picture changes when one looks further west to Iberia. There, the local population possessed few of the skills that characterised the Phoenician economy. The newcomers encouraged the exploitation of the rich metal deposits on the peninsula. From the 8th and 7th century, a few permanent settlements are attested. Phoenicians settled in farming communities, and devoted themselves to handicrafts and fishing. But for the most part, the Phoenicians seem to have come on shorter visits to established trading posts, to trade with the local population. The locals themselves obviously appreciated the foreign goods introduced by the Phoenicians, as is evident from goods in elite graves. There is no evidence of the Iberians taking over the alphabet at this early stage. An economic and cultural imbalance between Tartessians and Phoenicians does not necessarily imply any oppressive or abusive behaviour on the Phoenician part. The Phoenicians were few, and without the military back up to bully the locals. They probably had to treat the locals fairly (as far as the locals were able to determine this), or be run out of town.

Trade is exchange, and is a function of cultural interaction and migration. That which is defined as Iron Age trade ranges from direct balanced reciprocal exchange to complex feedback systems, and includes gifts between elites and votive gifts to deities. It is not possible to single out a separate economic sphere working along the lines of a capitalist market economy. The existence of independent capitalist entrepreneurs is illusory because the necessary network of institutions was lacking. Their actions were culturally, politically and religiously embedded in society. The diffusion of goods, people and skills is all integrated

within a *koine*, or community of cultural and economic interests. The *koine* may have its peripheral members, where exchange is imbalanced, but indigenous cultures have a tendency to work out the balance by adopting traits from foreign cultures into a synthesis that brings them on par with the foreigners. If a world-system theory for the ancient world is to be useful, the mechanisms of interaction must be accounted for from the literary and archaeological evidence, and not from formal economic theory.

5 General conclusion of part II

The Greek presence in Anatolia in the Dark Ages precedes even the Ionian migrations, and seems to bridge the gap between the fall of the Mycenaean palaces and the end of the Dark Age. Little is known of developments in this early period, but it seems evident that the surviving Greek communities were joined fairly early by newcomers from the Greek mainland. They were in close contact with the Anatolian peoples, especially the Lydians and Karians. These relations continued into historical times. The Greeks were also in contact with the Phrygians from quite early on. The Greeks were exposed to influences from Anatolian mythology and artistic developments throughout the Dark Age, which might explain certain motives in Greek literature reminiscent of Hittite myths. Political developments are difficult to assess, but there is some evidence for initial urbanisation at Smyrna already in the 9th century.

The early Greek settlements on Cyprus and in North Syria opened new opportunities for exchange of goods as well as ideas. The Greeks were in contact with Syrian peoples and Aramaeans, as well as Phoenicians, and later the Assyrians. Euboians sailed to the Near East, and people from the Near East sailed to Euboea: Finds of orientalia at Lefkandi demonstrates the early establishment of contacts between Greeks and Near Eastern peoples. These relations may have been characterised by exchange of gifts between elites. At any rate, the Greeks were not foreigners to the eastern Mediterranean in the 11th and 10th centuries. These contacts were expanded in the 9th to the 6th centuries, although few further colonies were established in the Levant.

Settlements on Cyprus had a mixed immigrant population of Phoenicians and Greeks. Greek settlements in Italy, like Pithekoussai, probably had a mixed population as well; it is at least highly probable that some Phoenicians lived among the Greeks in the western colonies. In addition, Greeks and Phoenicians had their separate, but adjacent colonies in the western Mediterranean. Their close interaction led to the Greek adaption of the Phoenician alphabet in the 8th century. This might have taken place several times, in several different places. One of them was probably Pithekoussai; another good candidate is Cyprus. The Greek settlements abroad were learning environments, where new knowledge was spread and new experiences were gained. In the formative years of the Greek polis, opportunities for learning from the political experiences of older, more advanced city-state civilizations were abundant.

Phoenician colonies abroad do not seem to have differed significantly from the Greek ones; often, Greeks and Phoenicians lived side by side in the same settlements. Evidence for cattle-raising and agriculture at Phoenician settlements in Iberia makes it probable that the

Phoenicians were not only itinerant traders, but lived in communities along the Mediterranean coast much like the Greek colonists. This makes it not improbable that the Greeks were able to draw on Phoenician political experiences in the formative period of the Greek polis. The Phoenician city-states were monarchies, but assemblies and councils played a decisive role in their politics. This might have played a part in the development of Greek egalitarian political structures, and eventually the emergence of Athenian radical democracy.

Developments in the East Aegean, West Anatolia and the Levant shaped the cultural and political landscape of the early Greek world to such an extent that, to paraphrase Martin L. West,⁵⁷ Greek culture is a Near Eastern culture.

⁵⁷ Cf. West 1966, 31

Part III

1 General introduction to part III

This part of the thesis is an examination of the development of democracy in the Greek polis, from its first instances in Hesiod and Homer, to the reforms of Ephialtes. This scope is admittedly vast, and the literature dealing with separate problems included in this discussion is enormous. It will hopefully be possible to manage a reasonable and comprehensive survey, however, of the developments resulting in radical Athenian democracy, and only dwelling at length on some focal points.

The first discussion will concern a comparison between the *Theogony* and the *Enūma Eliš*, the Greek and Mesopotamian myths of creation. The political structures revealed in these mythological accounts will provide a background for understanding how democracy evolved from an initial political organisation in assemblies, which granted leadership and thereby controlled the access to ruling power.

The next discussion will be an analysis of the political and jurisdictional structures in Homer, to investigate whether there are democratic traits in the workings of the first attested polis-like institutions. The relationship between leaders and the people, and the dynamics of councils and assemblies will be compared to other known city-state constitutions from the Near East. The development of these institutions is important to understand the later development of the polis and Athenian democracy. The polis probably took shape in the 8th century, in an environment characterised by interaction between Greeks and peoples of the wider Mediterranean environment.

As a further point of comparison, the Phoenician political and jurisdictional institutions will be examined, to see whether the close interaction between Phoenicians and Greeks in the 8th and 7th centuries have resulted in similarities in political structures.

The hypothesis that Greek democracy was a result of the development of the hoplite-strategy will be challenged. This is to see whether Athenian democracy may better be described as an internal development, or is part of a more general political development of common rule by the citizens in a city-state.

The significance of the reforms of Solon, the rule of the Peisistratids and the role of the tyrant slayers Harmodios and Aristogeiton will be investigated, and compared to contingent Near Eastern phenomena to determine the framework of the emergence of Athenian democracy.

Similarly, the reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes will be examined in light of Near Eastern developments, to determine whether Athenian democracy was a unique historical phenomenon, or if fits into a wider historical context of the development of Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures. Evidence from Egypt will not be discussed here, since this thesis is primarily concerned with the development of constitutions in city-states, and Egyptian society seems to have been organised quite differently.

2 The origins of leadership and the power of the assembly

2.1 Introduction

The stratification of society is based on unequal distribution of the resources: Those who have more than others may redistribute their wealth, and thereby gain adherents through gratitude, and debtors through loans. In a stratified society, these relations of property become institutionalised, and in a state, their permanence is granted through laws and a state monopoly on violence. Are there ancient sources to this development? Some literary texts from Mesopotamia and Ancient Greece may be interpreted from this theory of the emergence of power, to examine the possible evolution of politics in these societies. The aim is to demonstrate what kind of society the early Mesopotamian and Greek city-states were, by examining their mythological accounts of the emergence of power and kingship.

2.2 The emergence of power: *Utnapištim hosting a work-party*

The rise to power through lavish spending and giving feasts is seen in the Akkadian Epic of Gilgamesh,⁵⁸ where the hero goes to the end of the world to learn the secret of death from Utnapištim, the builder and captain of the ark. Utnapištim and his family are the last of the antediluvians, as he was warned of the Great Flood by the gods and instructed to build a ship.⁵⁹ Utnapištim relates how he built the ark assisted by the inhabitants of the country, the children carrying bitumen and the adults bringing what else was needed. Then he measured out and built the ark. He slaughtered many oxen and sheep, and provided wine for the workmen as plentiful as river water, making the occasion as festive as New Year's Day (tab. XI, 54-74).

Worth noting is the emphasis on the feast he gives for the workers, making the building of the ark a work-party (Qviller 2003, 6). The ability to pay workers and warriors in kind, especially with large quantities of food and drink, creates leadership through the obligation to pay back. The workers get paid with a feast and give up the produce of their own work. The workers are not slaves, but are bound to the obligation to reciprocate. They are likely to show up again the next time the work-leader proposes a common project.

Through a large household and lavish spending, the aspiring leader is able to initiate and control a communal undertaking and reap the results. The way from work-party to

⁵⁸ The original date of composition in Akkadian is placed at the turn of the second millennium BCE, if not earlier, but the texts are mainly from the library of Ashurbanipal (reigned c. 668-627) at Nineveh. The Epic of Gilgamesh is known from fragments of Akkadian, Hittite and Hurrian versions from the second millennium BCE found at Bogazköy, site of the Hittite capital Hattusha.

⁵⁹The text referred to is that of *ANET*³, 93 with the lines as there given throughout.

redistributive economy does not seem too far. The principle is more or less the same. Labour is not bought and sold, but bartered in a system of obligations. In a state-like society, such obligations tend to become institutionalised. Communal undertakings like building of temples and digging of canals were typical instances of work paid in rations in Mesopotamia. The patron was no longer a private person, but the ruler and his administration.

Compared with the situation in Homeric Greece, hosting feasts is a central responsibility for the king, and this seems to form part of his basis of power. Alkinoos addresses the Phaiakaeans as those who regularly sit at the table in his hall, drinking fine wine and listening to the songs of the bard (Od. 13.8-9). The basileus has a permanent responsibility to keep his men fed, and loses authority if he is unable to do so, as when Odysseus forbids his men to touch the cattle of Helios, giving them other provisions instead (Od. 12.320-24). They obey him as long as provisions last, but break the oath and slaughter the oxen when they can't get other food (Od. 12.339-65). The ruler owes his position not only to his function as war-leader and giver of gifts, but also as provider of flesh and wine to his crew and henchmen. The henchmen of the Homeric basileis are typically warriors, but they do perform other tasks as well, and may participate in large-scale communal projects, such as erecting stone walls (Il. 7.433-63).

2.3 From power to rule

Leadership is based on power, which may be gained through redistribution of private wealth. This leadership will tend to become discontinued, however, as the wealth becomes exhausted, or the occasion for redistribution is over. Institutionalised leadership, on the other hand, is bound to an assembly, the political extension of the community, which grants prominence to a leader. This may be inferred from sources to the emergence of kingship in Mesopotamia and Ancient Greece; the creation epics the *Enūma Eliš* and the *Theogony*.

The growth of leadership in Mesopotamian and Ancient Greek society may have been due to redistribution of wealth, such as giving of gifts and sharing of food. This hypothesis is strengthened by an analysis of ancient texts. From these initial assumptions, the emergence of kingship may similarly be analysed as an initial appointment of a champion of the community; as war-leader. In both Mesopotamian and Greek mythology, the king of the gods is initially a champion of his peers, who takes responsibility for his community against an enemy. After separate analyses of *Enūma Eliš* and the *Theogony*, the Mesopotamian and

Greek evidence will be compared to see whether the creation stories reveal any similar traits in the initial concepts of political power in Mesopotamia and Greece.

2.3.1 *Enūma Eliš* – Marduk as champion of the Assembly of the Annunaki

In the Babylonian Creation Epic, or *Enūma Eliš*, Marduk is appointed champion of the gods, in the war against Tiamat, the primeval mother of the gods.⁶⁰ This is a mythological account of how a king attained leadership in his community through being appointed as war-leader.⁶¹

The narrative begins with the union of Apsu and Tiamat, in which the first gods were born. The first generation was Anšar and Kišar, Lahmu and Lahamu. Anu appeared next, son of Anšar, and Ea son of Anu. They made much noise inside Tiamat, and their ways were intolerable. Therefore, Apsu wanted to kill them, so that he might have some peace. But Tiamat refused, and Ea heard of Apsu's plan to exterminate him and the other gods. After some consideration, he took courage and put a magic spell of sleep on Apsu. Then he stripped him of his regalia and slew him, building his house in and upon Apsu (i.e. the fresh waters). In Apsu, Marduk was born of Ea and Damkina (tab. I, 37-104).

Anu the lord of Heaven created the fourfold wind with which he harassed Tiamat and the gods inside her, and the gods from the line of Anšar annoyed the other gods with their noise. The other gods complained to Tiamat, and urged her to revenge her murdered consort Apsu. She created eleven monsters to attack the Annunaki, the gods rallied round Anu and Ea. Meanwhile, many gods mustered in support of Tiamat, and they held council. They form an assembly (*puhrum*). Kingu was appointed their chief and given command-in-chief by Tiamat. Then Kingu was charged to counsel all the gods and made Tiamat's only consort; he was to rule all the Annunaki, and wear the tablet of Destinies (tab. I, 105-61).

Tiamat prepared for war. Ea was aware that Tiamat had gathered an assembly against himself and the gods, and discussed the problem with his grandfather Anšar. At that time, many gods marched with Tiamat. Ea said that the firstborn of Tiamat, the gods, were her assembly, and that she had appointed Kingu chief over them. His authority was command in war against Ea and the gods (tab. II, 1-48).

The gods sent Ea and Anu to kill Tiamat, but they failed. Now, Anšar decides that Marduk be the champion of the Annunaki. Marduk is encouraged to stand up and talk to Anšar in the assembly, and he is accepted as their hero. He promises to vanquish Tiamat and

⁶⁰ The date of composition for this text is not certain, but none of the tablets antedates the first millennium BCE. Internal evidence speaks for a composition in the early part of the second millennium BCE, i.e. the Old Babylonian period.

⁶¹ The text referred to is that of *ANET*³, 60-72 with the lines as there given throughout.

Kingu. Appointed champion, Marduk proposes terms for his service: He wants to be ruler of the assembly of Ubšukinna, the council hall of the gods, and that his word shall not be gainsaid. The terms are to be discussed further, and his responsibilities laid down in a meeting of all the gods (tab. II, 49-129).

Gaga, the eloquent vizier of Anšar goes to Lahmu and Lahamu to invite all of the gods to a banquet for some heavy drinking and a debate on the office of Marduk. Marduk's proposal is to let his word, instead of theirs, determine the fates in the assembly of Ubšukinna. Then the gods make their decision during a drinking session (tab. III, 1-138). Marduk is set on a throne, and is given authority like Anu, the lord of the sky. He is proclaimed king of the whole Universe. A war follows, and after defeating Tiamat and her minions, he creates the Universe from her carcass (tab. IV). The rest of the story concerns how Marduk assigns the gods to their stations, and creates mankind. The last part is a list of the names of Marduk (tab. V, VI, VII).

The important term assembly (*puhrum*) is first met in tab. I, 130ff. Apparently, all the gods are entitled to participate, but there is no mention of any debate or voting. The candidate for leadership is only one, presented by Tiamat. Kingu's assignment is to take command in war, and his possession of the tablet of Destinies and enjoyment of the rank of Anu makes him the highest of the gods. Interestingly, the assembly is not put out of function. Kingu is to counsel the gods, but common deliberation is still an option. Also, Kingu is appointed from among his peers, and not from ties of blood or primogeniture.

In tab. II, 101ff, the authority belongs to the eldest male in the assembly, Anšar in the assembly of the Annunaki. The importance of physical strength and beauty, as well as rhetoric, is emphasised in describing the appointment of Marduk. Thus, the workings of the assembly are a bit clearer, but any directly democratic features are hard to detect. However, both Marduk and Kingu are invested with authority to take action on behalf of their communities. The welfare of society is the responsibility of its members.

The inebriated assembly in tab. III, 1-10 is a commonplace in ancient societies. Here, at least, is evident a popular debate among the gods (tab. III, 130). Unfortunately, there is no mention of how decisions were actually taken. But the common participation both in debate and drinking should indicate some kind of consensus reached in the matter, rather than a decision made by Anšar alone.

2.3.2 Birth of the city-state?

A political feature of the mythical poem is the decisive role played by assemblies in the narrative. Both Kingu and Marduk rely on support from the general assembly of the gods, in order to become leaders. In both cases, influential members of society propose the champions. The appointment of Marduk as champion takes place after his personal appearance before the assembly and Anšar, its leader. This may mean that the appointee could be rejected even though his supporters were powerful. This has inspired a discussion whether there was a representative democracy in early Mesopotamian society (cf. Jacobsen 1943 [1970], 157 ff.).

A special case is the drinking debate. It is vividly described: As they drank the strong drink, their bodies swelled. They became very languid as their spirits rose (tab. III, 136-7). The gods are obviously inebriated, in much the same way as the Olympian gods in their assemblies (see below). During their drinking session, the gods deliberate on the institution of kingship for the first time. Marduk is not only opting for supremacy among the gods, but of the whole world. Yet, he continues to exercise power through the assembly of the gods. The difference is that his word shall prevail over all the other gods. This implies that the gods deliberated in common. But the other instances of the assembly making decisions clearly show that a few influential individuals dominated the debate. An important organisational principle is that the community equals the polity, in the general assembly where all the gods participate. Authority is transferred from the assembly to the leader of the community.

There are some further examples of the assembly of the gods at work, to demonstrate that they reached decisions through deliberation in common, rather than being ruled by a king: In the Old Babylonian story of the flood, *Atrahasis*, the assembly of the gods meet many times to discuss difficulties such as the uprising of the Igigi, who have to do all the work, against the Annunaki.⁶² The representative of the workers presents his case to the assembly of the gods, and Ea proposes that the gods create mankind instead (tab. I, iv, SBV fragments). But as mankind grows too numerous, the gods decide to try and diminish their number. Enlil addresses to the gods in the assembly what to do, and the counter-devices of humanity are discussed by the human elders (*sillūnū*). The plans of the gods are agreed upon in common in the assembly (tab. II, v, OBV).

As none of the divine plans for exterminating humanity works, Enki and Enlil grow furious with each other over whose responsibility these humans really are, and why all their plans fail. The assembly agree that they cannot push Enki into destroying humanity, but Enlil

⁶² The text was written around 1700, in Old Babylonian. It was probably a compilation of older material, made by its author, called Ipiq-Aya (Dally 2000, 3). The text referred to here is that in Dalley 2000, 9-38.

will do the job. The gods decide to send a flood (tab. II, vi-viii). Meanwhile, Enki goes to warn Atrahasis that the gods are planning to send a flood against mankind (tab. III, i). As the flood starts taking its toll, some of the gods, especially Mami, the Lady of the Gods, have second thoughts about their decision. Mami blames Enlil for pushing his idea of a Flood through in the assembly, and says somebody should have vetoed the decision (tab. III, iii).

All this demonstrates that the assembly was at work in the world of the gods not only before the differentiation into more and less powerful gods, but throughout the mythological narratives. This shows that the Mesopotamians found it realistic that political decisions were debated and made in assemblies, and that even the gods might have their indifferences and argue openly within and against the assembly. The assembly does not cease to function with the evolution of kingship, and the leaders of the gods have no absolute power. There were several forms of political organisation in different, contemporaneous societies, although kingship became the universal ideal in Mesopotamia. Political organisation was liable to change, and was not the result of a unilinear evolution. Larger constellations of power rose and fell, and centralised control over several communities was hard to maintain. The most stable political element remained the city-state, although non-sedentary or semi-sedentary societies existed on the margins of the cities. There were also nomadic societies outside the world of the city-state.

2.3.3 Zeus becomes king of the gods

In the *Theogony* of Hesiod, which relates the birth of the gods and the creation of the cosmos, Zeus becomes king after successful battles against rebellious monsters.⁶³ In the world of the gods both kingship and assembly are implicit. The following is an examination of how Zeus became king, and his relation to the assembly of the gods.

In the *prooimion*, Hesiod tells how the world was created through the love of Ouranos and Gaia, and that the gods are their descendants. First, there was Chaos. Then Gaia, the mother of all things, came into existence, followed by Eros, who governs the hearts of men and gods. The starry Ouranos was born from Gaia, to be her consort and sire the kin of gods. The youngest of this first generation of gods is Kronos, the shrewdest and wiliest of his siblings (116-138).

⁶³ Martin West gives a date of 730-700, based on, among other evidence, the mentioning of Amphidamas and the Lelantine War (West 1966, 44-46).

Then were born the races of monsters. These children were detested by their father Ouranos and they were therefore kept hidden inside Gaia, where they romped around unceasingly. To get revenge, Gaia created iron from which a sickle was forged. Then she urged her children to avenge her, as the prolonged stay of her progeny pained her. After some deliberation, Kronos took up the challenge. As Ouranos arrived under cover of darkness to spend the night with Gaia, Kronos crept forth, sickle in hand, and forthwith cut the member from off his father's loins. He threw it into the sea. The children of Ouranos are called the Titans (139-210).

After this, more powers and gods were born, among them the Olympian gods. They were all swallowed by Kronos as soon as they were born, so that no other god would attain the honour of kingship among the immortals. Kronos knew that he was destined to be overthrown by a son. Rhea gives Kronos a big stone wrapped like a child to swallow instead of Zeus, who is soon to wrest the honour of kingship from him, and rule the immortals. Zeus was brought up in secret on Crete and grew up marvellously fast, and within a year he was able to defeat Kronos. Through force and cunning he made Kronos vomit up the stone and bring forth his siblings (453-506).

Thereafter, the gods war against the Titans over the supremacy of the Cosmos, and they release the races of monsters from their underworld prison to assist them. For ten years the battle has raged between the Olympians led by Zeus and the Titans and elder gods led by Kronos. The gods are assembled on Olympos, refreshing themselves on nectar and ambrosia, and debate on what to do. Their monstrous allies feast with them. A cataclysmic battle ensues (617-728).

But troubles are not over yet: Gaia brings forth yet another monster, Typhoeus. He is eventually defeated by Zeus (820-869).

Finally, the enemies of the Olympians are defeated. Encouraged by Gaia, Zeus is king and he conveys honours on the other gods as their king and ruler (881-900).

2.3.4 Zeus and the assembly

As was demonstrated in the case of Marduk, an assembly could play a decisive role in electing a king and determining his terms of rule. This is not immediately recognizable in the *Theogony*, but nonetheless, the gods are assembled in much the same way. A god who breaks an oath may not take part in a council, nor come to a feast for nine years (*oude pot' es boulēn epimisgetai oud' epi daitas/ennea pant' etea*) (Th. 802-3). The gods take the decision to

launch an all-out assault on the Titans while enjoying a feast of nectar and ambrosia. At the same time they make an alliance with the monsters. The heroic spirit of all was raised in their breast (*pantōn en stēthessin aexeto thymos agēnōr*) (Th. 639-43). This is quite similar to the assembled Annunaki at their drinking party mentioned above.

The assembly of the gods are frequently mentioned in the Iliad and Odyssey, too: In the Iliad, the gods are assembled in the golden hall of Zeus, gazing over the battlefield before Troy. While Hebe pours out the nectar, Zeus urges the gods to consider how to end the war, and decide on who the victor shall be. The debate ends in a quarrel between Hera and Zeus, but they agree on a compromise; to urge on the war afresh (Il. 4.1-72). In the Odyssey, the gods are likewise assembled in the hall of Zeus, and they debate on how they can send Odysseus home. They take advantage of the absence of Poseidon, the enemy of Odysseus, and decide to help him home (Od. 1.26-95).

These instances show that there were common traits in the mythological accounts of the origins of state-like society in Mesopotamia and Ancient Greece. It is evident that the assembly played a role in politics even on Olympos. Zeus is the mightiest, and can in principle not be gain-said, but there are many examples of unruly gods following their own agenda or manipulating the decisions of the king. The debate is also quite open, and the other gods are not afraid to voice opposition to Zeus.

2.3.5 The *Theogony* and *Enūma Eliš*

The *Theogony* has obvious parallels with the *Enūma Eliš*, which have been remarked by scholars many times (cf. West 1966, 18-31): There are the primeval parents, Apsu and Tiamat, the sweet and brackish waters, and Ouranos and Gaia, the heaven and the earth. Then they have children, and these children stir up trouble with their racket and noise. Ouranos confines his children inside Gaia, were they continue their commotion, whereas Apsu wants to kill his children straight away, and they are subsequently kept inside Tiamat.⁶⁴ After some hesitation, the oppressive father is killed or castrated by one of his sons, either in his sleep or during nightly sexual intercourse. But whereas Kronos swallows his children in fear of a rival,

⁶⁴ This element in the story is also found in the Old Babylonian *Atrahasis* as well as in the Homeric fragmentary *Cypria*: In *Atrahasis*, the newly created mankind are becoming too many, and their noise makes it impossible for the gods to sleep. After several unsuccessful attempts at wiping out mankind (tab. I and II), the assembly of the gods decide on sending a devastating flood to get rid of humanity once and for all (tab. II, vii). *Atrahasis* is forewarned in a dream, and he builds a boat to save what life he can together with himself and his family (tab. III, i-ii). The *Cypria* shares the idea of the multitude of humanity being a burden to the Earth: Once there were thousands of tribes of men roaming the broad Earth. Zeus had pity on her and in his shrewd mind decided to

Ea exults in his son Marduk, and the grandfather Anšar foresees his future greatness. Rhea saves Zeus through a stratagem, and he in turn gets even on Kronos.

The gods descending from Anšar, led by Anu and Ea, annoy the other gods, who next want them killed. They induce Tiamat to get at them for the killing of Apsu. She breeds monsters and assembles an army against the gods. In the battle, Marduk vanquishes the monsters, the army and Tiamat herself. Equally, Zeus and the Olympians have a conflict with the Titans, the older generation of gods. The gods beat the Titans, but Gaia breeds the monstrous Typhoeus who attacks the Olympians. Zeus defeats the monster. Both Marduk and Zeus then become kings of the Universe after their victories. They assign the honours and positions of the other gods, and thus create the ordered Universe.⁶⁵

2.4 Discussion

The similarities between the *Theogony* and *Enūma Eliš* are well-known, as are their parallels in other Near Eastern texts such as the Hittite *Song of Kumarbi* and *The Phoenician History of Sanchuniathon* (for a summary cf. West 1966, 18-31).⁶⁶ This made Martin West proclaim that Greek literature is a Near Eastern literature (West 1966, 31). West interpreted this as due to Ancient Near Eastern influences on Mycenaean culture, and that the *Theogony* springs out of a poetic tradition from the Bronze Age (West 1966, 28-29). West's latest attempt to explain the similarities between Hesiod and the Hurro-Hittite *Succession Myth* use the kindred features of the Phoenician material of Philo-Sanchuniathon to verify a constant Levantine tradition of such myths throughout the first half of the first millennium (West 1997, 286). Greek and Levantine contacts appear to be the main route of orientalising features in Greek culture (especially Syria and Euboea) (West 1997, 4, 8-9; Burkert 1992, 11-12).

The supposed Late Bronze Age material in Homer will be discussed later in this thesis; there is no decisive evidence for a continuous poetic tradition in Greece from the Bronze Age down to historical times. Claims of Mycenaean oral traditions as sources for the *Archaeologica* of Thukydides and other supposed ancient memories in Greek literature really beg the question how this could have been truthfully transmitted without writing. These

relieve Earth of some of these people by starting the Theban and Trojan wars (scholl. A, Vind. 61, minn. in A5(=Allen 1912, 117-118)).

⁶⁵ A bit odd is perhaps the sudden enmity of Gaia against the Olympians, as she is helping and supporting Zeus throughout the *Theogony*. The role of Tiamat in *Enūma Eliš* perhaps explains this behaviour (West 1966, 24).

⁶⁶ As these stories do not concern a leader in relation to an assembly, but are more purely tales of succession, I shall refrain from commenting further on them here.

traditions do not mention much of what is now known about the East Mediterranean in the Bronze Age, such as the Hittite Empire, nor indeed the Mycenaean palaces themselves.

Jean-Pierre Vernant (2000) contests the view that the similarities between the *Theogony* and *Enūma Eliš* reveal any kinship between Greek and Ancient Near Eastern literature and culture. He argues that the similarities are too general to prove any real parallel or related developments. He maintains that there is a fundamental difference between Greek and Mesopotamian literature in that whereas the Greeks had an oral literature and tradition in the Dark Age, the Mesopotamians had used writing to preserve their mythology throughout their history (Vernant 2000, 154). Vernant elaborates on his point that Greek culture is something different from anything Mesopotamian (or Indo-European): Greek poleis were presided over by individual deities, who were tutelary gods of the community. Parallel with this religious particularism, the Greeks had great Panhellenic deities and a common pantheon (ibid. 155). The use of writing in Greece led to the development of prose, and in the 6th century, philosophers started analysing the world using non-mythological concepts (ibid. 157-61). This led to an intellectual culture freed from the world of myth, and represented a new rationality.

Against Vernant's view of Greek uniqueness, the institution of tutelary deities presiding over Mesopotamian city-states should be mentioned. Likewise, that the Ancient Mesopotamian cities had a common pantheon and common cultic centres shared among several urban communities. The argument that Greek literature and philosophy was oral, whereas all Mesopotamian literature was written, is a simplification. Sumerian script probably served as a mnemonic device as much as a script, so that major parts of any story would be oral, and remembered by performing story-tellers. Only a few, educated people in Mesopotamia at any time could write or read cuneiform; it was a skill preserved among elite scribal schools, which trained officials for bureaucratic functions in temples and palaces. Ordinary people had their oral literature parallel to this, and many of the stories preserved in texts exist in many versions, which may reflect their oral existence outside the scribal schools.

Thorkild Jacobsen (1943 [1970]) argues that the *Enūma Eliš* is evidence for a primitive democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia. Combined with evidence of judiciary assemblies from Assyria (the assemblies of the merchants in Karum Kaneš) and Babylonia (assemblies mentioned in the *Codex Hammurapi*), he argues that the instances of mythological assemblies among the gods are memories of an original, primitive democracy in Mesopotamia. They are projections of the old assemblies, which no longer ruled the polities, but had done so in the past (Jacobsen 1943 [1970], 159-69). He argues that this evidence

demonstrates that Ancient Mesopotamia was originally democratic, before it became organised along autocratic lines. These ancient polities were ruled by councils of elders and popular assemblies (ibid. 169).

This seems a reasonable hypothesis, although the concepts of “original” or “primitive” are a bit unclear. Jacobsen’s parallel to “Teutonic” tribal democracies explains nothing, as this is a myth in scholarship, and now seldom propagated. But the argument that the mythological instances of assemblies and councils reflect a real concept of the organisation of power seems reasonable.

In an essay on the origins of the polis, Vernant (2000) refers to the idea that the Greek term *kratos* comes from an Indo-European origin of kingship as the herder of the people. However, Vernant argues that the Greek ruler was more of a *despotēs*, a father of the community (Vernant 2000, 166-7). Rather than having a ruling caste of priests, the power of Greek rulers went through a process of laicisation. This laicisation of power was based on the definition of an equality based on a definite, restricted circle; the citizens. From a rule by force, rule became institutionalised, laicised and depersonalised (ibid. 168).

Vernant argues that Solon linked *kratos* to *nomos* and *biē* to *dikē*; ruling power was subject to law, and force was subject to justice (Vernant 2000, 169). The development towards communal rule is evident in Homer: A placement of power *es meson* (in the middle of a circle of people) meant that it was depersonalised, socialised and laicised (ibid. 171-2). Likewise, the placing of gifts and prizes *en mesoi* meant a depersonalisation, which countered *charis*, a gratitude which implied obligations from the receiver towards the giver (ibid. 172-3). Vernant maintains that the laws and the community continued to be a part of divine justice and divine order. The equality between citizens in Greece was only possible through the definition of a small group, which meant that a large part of the population remained outside the circle of citizens, such as slaves, women and foreigners.

The concept of the king as shepherd is met in Homer, where the king is the *poimēn laōn*, the shepherd of the people or the host (Il. 2.85). In Mesopotamia, the king was the shepherd of the people or of the land. This was a Sumerian concept, but was also used of Babylonian kings: Hammurapi was the shepherd called by Enlil; *re’ūm nibīt^dEnlil* (Cod. Ham. I.50). Although rule in Greece was gradually laicised, the Homeric kings are described as *diotrephes basilēes*; fostered or cherished by Zeus (Il. 2.196). The concepts of kingship in Babylonia and Homeric Greece were quite similar in certain respects.

The Greek concept of society as in the middle of a circle of people, *es meson*, is found also in the Sumerian concept *ukkin*, the assembly, which may be translated as “circle of

people” (Diakonoff 1974, 10). Therefore, Sumerian city-states and the early Greek poleis may have shared some basic political traits.

2.5 Conclusion

From the analysis of the *Theogony* and *Enūma Eliš*, it may be argued that the mythological accounts of the emergence of kingship in Mesopotamia and Ancient Greece are quite similar. This similarity may be explained by a structural similarity between the Mesopotamian city-state and the Greek polis: The power of rulers was granted by an assembly. Power in the community rested in deliberative assemblies, where decisions were taken. The initial, mythological division of power is a reflection of a real situation of power in early city-states and in the Greek polis. The basis of power in society was the community of citizens.

The city-state and the polis are characterised by a concept of power which is based on deliberative assemblies. This power was never completely laicised. Magistrates in Greek cities had cultic responsibilities as well as secular ones. The cities were under divine protection, and city-cult was a central element of civic identity and unity. Likewise, political rhetoric is full of references to the supernatural and the gods. Important is, however, that power rested on decisions taken in deliberative assemblies, and not in the hands of a ruler. The community of citizens equalled the polity.

3 The political and jurisdictional structures in Homer*

3.1 Introduction

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are in many respects political poems. First, there is the ongoing political conflict in the *Iliad* between the Trojans and Achaeans, which they try to resolve not only militaristically, but also through diplomatic and political means. Also, in the *Odyssey* there is the political struggle among the suitors to win Penelope's hand and attain supremacy over the other kings on Ithaca, which they attempt to solve through political institutions. Both these conflicts, however, are resolved through force and violence. But political institutions are at work in many instances throughout the epics, and function in ways similar to what is known of historical institutions.

The political structures of the Homeric world are first and foremost recognisable in the descriptions of assemblies and debates in the Achaean camp and the polis of the Trojans, on Ithaca, in Pylos and elsewhere. The assemblies (*agora*) and laws (*themis*) are the central traits of the Homeric Greek civilization, mentioned in contrast to the lawless Cyclopes and other savages.

The important political fora are the *agora*, which is the public "assembly", and the *boulē*, which is a more restricted "council". They take the form of meetings to which all or part of the people is summoned, deliberating on political and judicial matters. These matters may be private or of concern for the whole society, and range from private disputes to foreign politics. The emphasis at these meetings is on speeches and the spoken word, with no codified law, no witnesses and no written evidence referred to. The meetings have no regular hours or terms, but are summoned on an ad hoc-basis by a king or chieftain. The proceedings start in the early morning, and usually last to the next meal or until nightfall. There is no voting, and the debate lasts until a decision is made or some compromise is reached. Participants are summoned by heralds, and gather at certain places outside the polis or camp. At these meeting-places stand altars to the gods, and sometimes, honorary seats for the judges. The assemblies were cultic phenomena as much as any other Greek cultural activity and righteousness was protected by Zeus himself.

The important political actors are the *anax* and *basileus*; "the king" or "chieftain", the *mantis*; "the soothsayer", the *gerontes*; "the elders", the *laoi*; "the army", "people" or

* Parts of this chapter were written and held as a Referat at the Freie Universität Berlin 21.01.03, under the title *Die politischen und rechtlichen Strukturen bei Homer* during the seminar *Die Homerische Zeit und Welt* led by

“common folk”, and the *dēmos*; “the people”, but in Homer practically the same as the *laoi*. In addition to these comes the *kēryx*; “the herald”, which summons the participants and maintains order in the crowd. All the political actors are adult males, and they differ in status and rank. Age, wealth, descent, and skills in battle and the assembly are factors determining a man’s rank and position, building a political and social persona. The Homeric heroes are constantly engaged in *agōnes*, i.e. “competitions”, to prove their worth.

Important decisions are made in both the *boule* and *agora*; strategic, political and jurisdictional. A certain discourse dictated by elite values rules the debate, and ability to speak in public is part of the warrior’s virtues. Rhetoric plays an important role, and speeches as a rule contain elements of self-praise and references to the supernatural. The speech must be intelligent and to the point, but also beautiful and skilled, well adjusted to the rules of discourse and the status of both speaker and audience. The speaker himself must act correctly and look good, often dressed up for the occasion and wearing signs of rank such as weaponry and a sceptre. The political speech is a performance, serving to present the speaker as a certain political and social character. The discourse of the debate is a kind of *agōn* between the heroes; where self-praise and reviling play major roles. The references to oracles and omens are decisive arguments in cases of doubt.

The active participation in debates at assemblies is limited to the heroes, through a discourse that makes popular participation difficult. This makes the Homeric assemblies less democratic than their structure should indicate. The epic gloss, however, is a constant blur obscuring the historicity of these institutions. Therefore, the *agora* can be studied as a proto-democracy structurally, if not in practice in the Homeric epics.

The Homeric political and jurisdictional structures do not seem to represent any historical reality, but rather to be composites of several elements, especially from 8th century Archaic Greece. In the following, I will examine the political institutions of the Homeric epics more closely, to see how they relate to the later Athenian democracy, and to compare them to other, structurally similar institutions in the Near East.

I will use examples from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to illustrate the different roles of the *anakes* and *basileis*, *gerontes* and *laoi*, and how performance and discourse works in the *boule* and *agora*. First I will present the political actors and institutions, and discuss their different roles. Then I will relate a longer passage from the *Second Song* of the *Iliad*, where the different kings, the *boule* and *agora* act in concert and contrast to each other. I will relate a

prof.dr.s Ernst Baltrusch and Michael Meier-Brügger at the FU Berlin, Wintersemester 2002/3. I am grateful to them and my fellow students for their comments and suggestions.

further passage from the *Second Song* of the *Iliad* to illustrate the rules of discourse in the agora, and the importance of performance.

In the final part, I will compare the Homeric institutions to the Sumerian dual-chamber system of assemblies (*ukkin*) and the Hebrew *baša'ar*-institution to see whether there are any structural similarities between these political institutions. I will discuss whether the Homeric institutions are in any way historical, and whether they can be considered the forerunners of the later Athenian democracy.

3.2 The king

There are two Greek words for king in Homer, *anax* and *basileus*. The difference in function of these two terms is not clear.⁶⁷ Throughout this chapter, Homeric kings are referred to as *basileis*.

The *anax* or *basileus* is a rich landowner, with a limited local area of influence. He is often judge in times of peace (Od. 5.6-11), and war-leader in larger enterprises such as the Trojan War and smaller raids. He is the *poimēn laōn*; “the shepherd of the host, or the people” (Il. 2.85). The function of the *basileus* is summed up in the phrase *Argeiōn hēgētores ēde medontes* (Il. 2.79); “the chiefs in war and rulers of the Argives”. This is ideologically explained through a meritocratic ethos. The *basileis* are the bravest in battle, and thus have authority and power. They should not be gainsaid by any member of the *demos*, neither in the *boule* nor in battle (Il. 12.211-14).

The economic basis of power for a *basileus* is landed property, such as farmland, pastures and a *dōma*; “a house”, or “a hall”, or *megaron*. The land and the house may well be separated by quite a distance, the produce being transported to the house by shepherds living in the countryside. Important are also human resources such as servants, shepherds and workers in household industries such as spinning and weaving, grinding flour and baking (Od. 18.313-19; 20.105-9; 22.421-25). These resources, together with livestock, grain, oil and wine make out the actual wealth of the *basileus*. Cereals, fruits and meat were produced outside the household on separate plots, orchards and pastures. Wool and metal was processed in the household, and the *oikos*-industry served a more or less self-sufficient economy. The

⁶⁷From the Pylos-tablets, it seems that the *anax* was the Mycenaean word for king, whereas the *basileus* was some kind of district governor. I am grateful to prof. dr. Meier-Brügger for pointing this out to me. This might be taken as evidence for a change in political organisation from the LBA to EIA, the collapse of the Mycenaean palace-system meaning the end of centralised power under an *anax*, which is replaced by the rule of regional chieftains, the *basileis*. This is hard to prove, however, since the Homeric titles and epithets seem dictated more by metre than by political history.

ostentative wealth of exotic imports and gifts, on the other hand, served little purpose outside the circle of givers and receivers.

The redistributive economy of the Mycenaean palaces is not recognisable in Homer. Workers are not giving up their produce to a centralised palace or temple, but perform specific tasks as dependent servants or slaves. Slavery, and the buying and selling of individuals, is frequently mentioned: The swineherd Eumaios was taken by Phoenicians in his childhood on the island Syria and sold to Laertes as a slave (Od. 15.402-83). He himself owns a slave, Mesaulios, whom he had bought off some Taphian seafarers (Od. 14.449-52). The Suitors propose to deport the strangers Teoklymenos and Odysseus (disguised as a beggar) to Sicily and sell them there (Od. 20.381-82). Unfree male workers who were the personal property of rich landowners raised cattle, cereals and fruits, and unfree female servants or workers performed most domestic tasks. But the landowners themselves also took part in such activities; Penelope and Helen produce clothes, and Laertes lives and works in his vineyards and orchards (Qviller 1981, 119). On the other hand, all heavy or demeaning work seems to be performed by unfree labourers. The *therapōn*, i.e. “servant”, seem to be the norm rather than *doulos*, i.e. “slave”, which was the classical term for Greek chattel-slaves.

The wealth of the household made possible the frequent feasts of the Homeric heroes, which in a sense form the basis for the exalted position of the basileus. Through distributions of meat and wine, a rich man would earn the gratitude of his recipients and gain an advantage on those unable to return the favour. The man with the largest household, and subsequent production of food and other resources, could throw the best parties and thereby gain the most adherents. Those who cannot afford to show a similar degree of generosity become the giver’s clients. This principle also worked in the constitution of war-parties, where magnanimous feasting acted as both reward for the participants and a statement of the leader’s authority and claim to power (Od. 14.246-56; Qviller 2003, 6).

Apart from food and clothes produced and consumed at home, luxury items play a role in a system of reciprocity between the basileis. Gifts and the return of gifts are natural ingredients of any visit, and next to hospitality they are the main indicators of a basileus’ magnanimity. The Homeric heroes seem to go on veritable tours from friend to friend along the coast, collecting valuable gifts of exotic or precious objects (Od. 1.307-18; 4.589-619). These objects are subsequently stored in the *doma*, and given away to other visitors in their turn. Odysseus urges Alkinoos to send him home with many gifts, because this will make his return easier, and earn him respect on Ithaca (Od. 11.355-61). The gifts are not only given from ruler to ruler, as the local population also contribute to honour prominent guests:

Menelaos invites Telemachos on a tour through the poleis of the Peloponnesos, where they are sure to receive all kinds of precious gifts (Od. 5.80-5).

There are specific rules concerning the giving of gifts, and it is not proper to refuse one (Od. 8.285-87; Mauss 1950 [1995], 29-30). The giving of gifts is a form of social and economic storage, because the receiver had an obligation to reciprocate. When Odysseus meets his old father Laertes, he claims to be Eperitos from Alybas, and tells how he once received Odysseus and showered him with gifts. Laertes replies that all his gifts were for naught, as Odysseus is gone. He, who gives first, has a claim to a gift in turn, but with Odysseus dead, the investment is lost (Od. 24.269-84).

This system of balanced reciprocity among the elite of the eastern Mediterranean seem to be a quite extended network of exchange, from Sidon on the Levant to Lakedaimon on Peloponnesos, from Ithaca all the way to Sicily in the west, with seafarers sailing down to Egypt and keeping contact between Crete and the Greek mainland. This network of traffic in luxury-wares and goods of prestige is well attested from the Bronze Age through numerous finds of archives in Egypt and the Levant, and shipwrecks off the coast of Turkey. It seems like the system of exchange of precious items was following the same routes,⁶⁸ and perhaps the same mechanisms, in the Iron Age. The principle of balanced reciprocity, as defined by Marshall Sahlins (Sahlins 1972, 194-6), means that the giver of a gift can count on recompensation at a not too distant point of time from the giving of the gift, and in like measure. The exchange of gifts also helps to regularise contacts between distant friends and strengthen alliances.

The moral basis for the power of the basileus is higher *genos*; “birth, kin, stock”, to be *eugenes*, i.e. “of noble descent”, in contrast to *kakos*; “bad or unworthy” (Od. 4.60-5). Also terms like *kressōn* and *kheirōn* (Il. 1.78-80), i.e. “mighty” vs. “weak”, “morally good” vs. “bad”, refer to genealogical properties. The basileis are described as fostered or cherished by Zeus in the phrase *diotrephes basilēes* (Il. 2.196), and frequently enjoy special favours from the gods, who may even be their parents or grandparents. The basileis are said to descend from the gods themselves (Od. 4.60-3). The special relationship between the gods and the basileis is also revealed in their role as priests and their ability to read omens.

The Homeric heroes may be seen as extreme versions of people from the 8th century, who were very ready to use violence to defend their honour. Hybris is then not an act of transgression that would be punished by the gods or society, but is punished by the heroes

⁶⁸ I am grateful to dr. Karin Bartl for pointing this out to me.

themselves, to the chagrin of him who is unable to do so (Morris 2000, 173-4). On the other hand, friendships and alliances between basileis created a balance built not only on violence, but also on economic exchange. The relationship between basileis and laoi seem to be determined by economic dominance and obligations rather than violence.

It is possible to use two anthropological terms to describe the basileus. First, there is the giving of food and wine that ensures the basileus a following like some kind of “big-man”, building his power through gifts that cannot be repaid by the recipient (Qviller 1981, 117-27). The ethos of gratefulness binds the recipient in a client-relationship to the giver. Second, there is his role in a system of balanced reciprocity placing the basileus on par with other basileis, which is underlined by the egalitarian spirit of such networks, belying the basis for the gifts themselves.

The power of the basileus is personal, and not guaranteed through dynastic claims or laws. Each basileus must defend his position through economic, militaristic and social means. Against this tendency of fragmentation acts the common solidarity within the elite, as when Odysseus defends Agamemnon against Thersites (Od. 2.246-64). But generally the basileis are constantly competing with each other, and the other basileis on Ithaca show little sympathy with Telemachos, nor indeed with his absent father, Odysseus (Od. 2.40-88; 198-207). The authority of the king is finally based on violence, even though his power has an economic basis. Therefore, Agamemnon is unable to force Achilles into fighting against the Trojans, as Achilles is strong enough to offer resistance. Also, the problem with the Suitors on Ithaca is resolved through violence, even though some suitors were willing to yield as soon as Odysseus returned (Od. 22.45-59). The authority of any basileus could be threatened by any other basileus, and even though dynasties occur, their claim to power had to be actively enforced.

3.3 The council and assembly

The Achaean and Trojan structure of council and assembly in the *Iliad* differ from each other in some respects. Both have an agora as a popular assembly, but whereas the Achaeans have a boule of basileis, the Trojan boule is one of gerontes around king Priamos. Both kings, Agamemnon and Priamos, have seven counsellors that seem almost equal to them in rank. Their number is probably not fixed, since Achilles is part of the council when he is not sulking by his ships, thus making the original number of Achaean counsellors eight. The central skill for these institutions is rhetoric, and a hero is described as eloquent and brave in

like measure, summing up his heroic virtues. The noise of speaking is often compared with insects, like the buzzing of bees (Il. 2.87-98) or the song of cicadas (Il. 3.149-53).

3.3.1 The *boulē* of *basileis*

The council of the Achaeans consists of theanax Agamemnon, and the seven central basileis; Menelaos, Nestor, Odysseus, both the Aiantes, Diomedes and Idomeneus (Il. 10.42-118). They frequently meet in secret, and hatch plans unknown to the laoi, even trying to dupe them with complicated schemes. The seven basileis form the inner circle around theanax, not only as councillors, but also as commanders of their own contingents. Theanax and the basileis are active fighters, as well as performers of religious ceremonies to ensure success for the Achaeans. They are also described as *megathymoi gerontes*, i.e. “magnanimous elders”, as they are gathered to a boule (Il. 2.53).

The contingents as listed in the *Catalogue of Ships* (Il. 2.484-762) seem to be composed of several smaller bands commanded by a local leader, which is then put under yet a regional leader, making the structure of command brittle with its many levels of loyalty. Each basileus arrives with his own private army, which again consists of smaller bands of warriors from the respective communities that make up the realm of the basileus. According to legend, the other basileis followed Agamemnon to Troy because they all had tried to win the hand of Helen, and taken a vow to her father Tyndareus to protect her whomsoever of her suitors she might marry (alluded to in Il. 2.336-56). But Thukydides supposed that Agamemnon, as a mightier king, was able to force the others to join him against Troy (Thuc. 1.9). However that may be, as the battle of Troy probably never happened; only the political structures revealed in the epics interest us. As seen above, the power of any king was structurally built up around obligations, thus binding less powerful kings to himself as a lavish spender.

This power structure is open to adjustments, making it a fairly unstable system. The personal performance of the king determines his success, with no constitutional back-up if he should fail (Qviller 1981, 115). Therefore, the dominance of theanax in the boule is by no means absolute, and matters of strategy and tactics are debated freely. Theanax can be gainsaid, but his word carries greater weight than others. Agamemnon can use a sign he has seen in a dream to convince the boule of an action, and his own interpretation of the dream is not questioned (Il. 2.79-83). But the fight between Achilles and Agamemnon at the very start

of the *Iliad* clearly shows the ambivalent and vulnerable position of the king. When directly challenged, he may have to yield.

3.3.2 The *boulē* of *gerontes*

The boule of the Trojans is a council of elders, who meet by the city-gates: *heiato dēmogērontes epi Skaiēisi pylēisi* (Il. 3.149), *dēmogērontes* meaning “the elders of the people, nobility, chieftains”, and *pylai* meaning city-gates.⁶⁹ They are described as eloquent, their talk sounding like the sweet chirping of cicadas in a tree (Il. 3.151-2). The boule consists of the king and seven counsellors: Hiketaon, Pantoos, Klytios, Lampos, Tymoites, Antenor and Ukalegon.⁷⁰

The elders are gazing out over the battlefield from the city-walls, without taking part in the fray themselves: *hēgetores hēnt' epi purgōi* (Il. 3.145-161), i.e. “leaders sitting on the tower”. They are *gerontes bouleuteis* (Il. 6.110-15), i.e. “the old counsellors”. Unfortunately, their meeting is interrupted by the beautiful Helen passing by, and the elders are unable to concentrate (Il. 3.154-60). The session ends with the elders talking worriedly to each other about the fate of their city and the outcome of the war. Their role seems to be as senior advisors to the king, and not as leaders of separate contingents in the army.

3.3.3 The *mantis*

Frequently throughout the epics, the supernatural plays a decisive role in political debates and in reaching decisions. The *mantis*, i.e. “prophet”, is either consulted concerning omens, or he reminds the agora of some ancient or recent sign. Anyone can take omens from dreams, birds or even sneezing, but the *mantis* is a professional consultant of the supernatural, whose interpretation carries a certain weight.

The Greeks themselves held some dreams to be true or meaningful, and others to be nonsense. Penelope says that dreams emerging from the Ivory Gate are without truth, but the

⁶⁹ I would suggest that the preposition *epe* in Il. 3.149 be understood as “by”, and not as “upon”, even though *epe* with dative frequently translates as “upon”. This I suggest in analogy to the phrase *hoi d'agoras agoreuon epe Priamoio thyrēisin/pantes homēgerees, ēmen veoi ēde gerontes* (Il. 2.788-789), i.e. “they gathered themselves in an assembly by the doors of Priamos, all gathered alike, were they young or old”, in which the meaning clearly is “by”, “in front of” or “in the vicinity of”, and not “upon”. This would give the reading for Il. 3.149: “The elders of the people were sitting by the Skaian Gates”, and not “upon the Skaian Gates”. This is important for its further analogies with gerousias in Ancient Israel, a matter to which I shall return in the second half of this chapter.

⁷⁰ Even though these are Greek names, and their speech is Greek, that is no reason to suppose they are not representatives of what Homer conceived as an Anatolian or Asiatic culture. An *interpretatio Graeca* would be the only reasonable mode of presentation to most audiences.

dreams of the Gate of Horn come true (Od. 19.556-64). Dreams are sent from Zeus (Il. 1.63). Often, an omen is interpreted as confirming an assumption, and not as a sign in its own right. Penelope holds a harangue over the Suitors, and wish for Odysseus to return and slay the lot. Then Telemachos sneezes violently, and she takes it as a confirmation that her wish will come true (Od. 17.528-50). Special rules applied to the interpretation of birds in flight; a bird coming from the right was regarded favourable. In Sparta, an eagle snatching a goose crosses the path of Telemachos and Menelaos. Peisistratos, the son of Nestor and companion of Telemachos, asks Menelaos what it might mean; if it is a sign for them or for him. But Helen answers first, prophesising the return and vengeance of Odysseus (Od. 15.160-78). The famous oak in Dodona was believed to give messages from Zeus, and Odysseus claims to have gone there to seek advice on how to get home to Ithaca (Od. 14.327-30). Women seem to have a certain knack with omens, as is evident from the Oracle at Delphi. But the *manteis* were in general male, as were the guardians of Dodona.

In the agora, the *mantis* could have the final word in difficult situations. An episode in the *First Song* of the *Iliad* illustrates this point: When the Plague has ridden the Achaean camp for nine days, Achilles summons an agora and proposes to Agamemnon that they should ask a *mantis*, *hiereus*; “priest, sacrificer, diviner”, or *oneiropolos*; “interpreter of dreams”. He might tell them why Apollo is angry, and how they may appease him (Il. 1.53-67). Then Kalkhas, an *oiōnopolōn*, i.e. “augur, one busied with the flight and cries of birds”, who accompanies the Achaeans to Troy because of his *mantosynē*, i.e. “art of divination”, speaks. His art is a gift from Apollo, but nevertheless he demands a guarantee for his own safety from Achilles. He fears the anger of Agamemnon at what he is about to say (Il. 1.68-83). Achilles having promised to help him, he reveals the cause of the Plague. The daughter of Chryse, the priest of Apollo, must be returned to her father. The girl, Chryseïs, is the prize of Agamemnon, and he is furious at Kalkhas. He calls him *mantis kakōn*, i.e. “prophet of things evil”, and accuses him of always prophesying bad things, and never to do or divine anything good. But as much as he loves the girl, he follows the word of Kalkhas and agrees to give her up to save the host. He demands a replacement, though, as he is not willing to be without a prize (Il. 1.92-120).

This is the reason for the future wrath of Achilles, as his girl, Briseïs, will be the replacement for Chryseïs. But the point in this episode is that however much Agamemnon resents Kalkhas and loves the girl; he heeds his word and acts accordingly. This demonstrates the power of the *mantis* in the assembly in times of crisis, and the important role of appeals to superstition in debates.

Sometimes the mantis is ignored in the agora, as is illustrated by an episode in the *Second Song of the Odyssey*: Telemachos has summoned an agora to complain about the Suitors who devour his property. They refuse to leave his house until Penelope agrees to marry one of them. Telemachos threatens them with future death and destruction, and as he speaks, two eagles appear in the sky. Everyone worries what this might mean (Od. 2.1-156). Halitherses, an old hero and well-versed in reading the flight of birds, interprets the signs to the agora. He addresses the Suitors in particular, and warns them that Odysseus may be near, plotting their doom. His credentials as a soothsayer should be in order, as he prophesied a late return of Odysseus before he left for Troy (ibid. 157-76). But Eurymakos, one of the Suitors, scoffs at him and bids him go home and read the fortunes of his own sons instead. Eurymakos points out that birds are everywhere, and do not always carry signs. He believes Odysseus is dead, and threatens Halitherses with a harsh penalty for his interpretation. He urges Telemachos to send Penelope home to her father where she should make herself ready for marriage. The Suitors fear neither the young man Telemachos nor the old soothsayer Halitherses (ibid. 177-207).

This demonstrates that the mantis was not always respected, and was not necessarily a figure of authority in the agora. On the other hand, as the Suitors are depicted as disrespectful brutes throughout, this might indicate that a mantis would normally be heeded. Only lawless men throw the omen of a soothsayer in his face, and the Suitors pay a dear price for their arrogance when Odysseus at last returns. However that may be, in this case the mantis has no ready answer or prepared speech for the agora, but gives an interpretation of an omen on the spot. The episode also illustrates the problem of determining whether an omen really is an omen or not.

Even though the success of the mantis differs in the two episodes, the role and potential power of the supernatural in the agora is clearly illustrated. Arguments from the flight of birds, dreams or divine inspiration were valid in a political debate, and could carry great weight.

3.3.4 The *agora of laoi*

The agora has many different functions, but in the *Iliad* it works for the most part as a forum for proclamations to the *laoi*. The *boule* reveals its latest decisions, while the army listens. There are also debates on strategy, and official problems such as the Plague (Il. 1.54-305) are

discussed openly. But the opinion of the individual commoner is never asked nor voiced, and decisions are reached by general consent or dictated by the boule.

The agora is also an institution of justice, or court, at which complaints and appeals can be directed. The topics are then discussed in public, and sentences may be passed by the agora or some smaller boule. A famous example is the description of the Shield of Achilles, where a court-session is depicted. Two men are having a conflict over a fine for manslaughter, and the elders of the assembly, for whom special stone seats are provided, pass the sentences. Two talents in gold is the prize for the best speaker (Il. 18.497-508). There are no references to written laws, and *themis*; “justice”, is a metaphorical term meaning “border” or “limit”, metaphysically speaking “that which is proper” or “within proper measures or bounds”. This makes *themis* a question of custom and tradition, the norm by which something is considered right or wrong. The personified *Themis* is goddess of the agora (Od. 2.68-9).

The Cyclopes are the opposite of civilized people, having neither agoras nor *themistes* (Od. 9.112). The Greeks termed anyone who didn’t participate in public business an *idios*, i.e. “isolated or private person”, ancestor to our modern term idiot. If the Homeric agora is seen as a proto-democracy, the Cyclopes would be the proto-idiot. This illustrates how the Greeks valued intellect as a skill bound to active political participation and performance in public. Politics was expected to be part of the life of every normal citizen.

In the Achaean camp, the whole laoi participate in the agora. The actual debate is limited to the heroes, which might mean that they were the only ones talking, or that the epic genre demanded heroic speech. On Ithaca, the entire male population participate in the agora (Od. 2.6-11), and also in Pylos, where Nestor sits at the agora with his sons at his side (Od. 3.31-3). In Troy, both young and old participate at the agora by the doors of Priamos (Il. 2.785). In all these instances the speakers are mainly heroes. A Trojan agora is described as *agora deinē*, i.e. “horrid assembly”, meaning noisy or unruly. The only speakers are Antenor, Paris and Priamos, whereas the laoi are passive listeners (Il. 7.345-378). Generally, commoners should not speak in the assembly, and their noise is frequently silenced violently by *kerykes* or *basileis*.

3.3.5 The dynamics of *boulē* and *agora*

The workings of the boule and agora are clearly described in the *Second Song* of the *Iliad* (Il. 2.50-207): Agamemnon has had a dream, in which a messenger from Zeus in the form of Nestor tells him to arise and arm himself, for now is the time to take Troy. Upon waking, he sends *kerykes* to summon the longhaired Achaeans to the agora (ibid. 50).

But first he gathers the magnanimous elders to a boule by the ship of Nestor, and relates to them his dream. He has full confidence that this is a true omen, but decides to test the Achaeans, encouraging them to break the siege and take flight in the ships. Then the other basileis are supposed to talk them out of fleeing. The others agree to this scheme, and Nestor exclaims that no other Achaean would have been believed if he related such a dream, but that Agamemnon must be right, being the best of the Achaeans (Il. 2.53-83).

The laoi rush to the agora. They are buzzing like bees swarming from hollow cliffs in spring. Ossa, “Rumour”, the messenger of Zeus, is burning among them and driving them on. Nine kerykes strive to silence the noisy agora, and make it listen to the basileis (ibid. 95-98). The crowd finally falls silent, and Agamemnon rises to speak wielding a sceptre, an ancient heirloom forged by Hephaistos himself. He claims Zeus has bidden him leave for Argos, as they will not be able to take Troy after all (Il. 2.86-115).

Their task being futile, they might as well go home and the laoi are more than willing to do so. The entire assembly breaks up and the host storms down to the ships to leave Troy for good. According to the plan, the other basileis try to stop them, to no avail.

Then Athena inspires Odysseus to take the sceptre of Agamemnon and go rally the troops. When he meets any basileus or excellent man, he tries to stop him with words, saying how unworthy it is for such a man to be afraid: “All does not know the scheme of Agamemnon; it was a scam to test your loyalty, and who knows how he will punish the Achaeans for their cowardice” (Il. 2.188-97). But when Odysseus meets a commoner, he hits him with the sceptre and rebukes him, bidding him to shut up and listen to his betters: “The commoner is a nobody both in battle and in council; indeed not all can rule the Achaeans. There is no good in *polykoiraniē*, (i.e. “rule of many”); one ruler must be, one king, to whom Zeus gave the sovereignty” (Il. 2.198-205). At last the laoi return noisily to the agora, like the waves of the sea (ibid. 207-9).

There is a marked difference both in the workings and status of the two institutions, the council and the assembly. The basileis are keeping secrets from the laoi, and manipulate the agora through a mock call for retreat. The majority in the agora, voting with their feet, wants to return home, but the decision of the boule is the exact opposite. Odysseus treats the laoi with contempt, and herds the commoners brusquely back to the agora.

Such secret scheming is perhaps not surprising in a war-situation, but the deliberate testing of the laoi seems a bit strange, and reveals the real balance of power. The basileis make the decisions in the boule, and the laoi take their orders in the agora. Interestingly enough, the decision they have made is based on completely irrational grounds, namely the

dream of Agamemnon. There is no real discussion; Nestor thinks it's a good idea and then they all agree. Nobody seems to mind the agora, and any further deliberation on the matter is out of the question. The boule has decided to make an end to the war through total victory over the Trojans. Thus the dynamics of the boule and agora works along the chain of command, and the decisions are taken by the basileis as leaders of the host. The rule of many is out of the question, and that presumably goes for democracy too, as far as the elite are concerned.

Fritz Gschnitzer discusses whether the basileis and *gerontes* were organized in two different councils (Gschnitzer 1984 [2001], 186). The elders seem to be entitled to a *gerousios oinos* from the people, i.e. a wine for the elders (ibid. 187), as well as having separate seats in the assembly (ibid. 194). He compares this to the Athenian *prytaneis*, who formed a council separate from the Council of Five hundred, and presided over the Assembly (ibid. 195).⁷¹

This would mean a further division, that of the council into two separate institutions. The relations of power seem consistently to be organised in a duality of council and assembly, but it may be argued that the council was a more intimate part of the workings of the assembly, or that decisions were not definitely taken there before they were presented to the assembly for deliberation. If the comparison to the Athenian *prytaneis* is right, this would strengthen the argument that the secret, preparatory councils were exceptions necessary as precautionary measures during the siege at Troy.

3.3.6 The discourse of the agora

A further example illustrates the rules of discourse in the agora itself. In the *Second Song* of the *Iliad*, the laoi are gathered again in the agora after the false call to flight. All fall silent except Thersites, who still clamours and badmouths the basileis. He is a notorious slanderer, who argues with the basileis in rude language (*epea akosma*) and tries to make the Achaeans laugh with his abuse against the kings (Il. 2.211-16). He is described as the ugliest man of the

⁷¹ Gschnitzer argues that the “probouleumatic” function of the council vis-à-vis the assembly in the Homeric epic is a foreign element: The evidence points to a council with a prominent place in the assembly, rather than having separate meetings preceding the assembly (Gschnitzer 1983 [2001], 200ff.): There are numerous instances of assemblies without preceding councils. Sometimes, the council seems to meet to prepare proposals for the assembly, but are seated in the midst of the assembly itself. In these instances, the assembly acts as an audience, rather than an active part of the proceedings (ibid. 202). The council of elders have special seats in the assembly. This may be an early instance of the later Classical institution of the *prytaneis* (ibid. 203-5). If it is indeed true that the council in the Homeric epic did not reach their decisions beforehand, but deliberated and reached their decisions within the assembly itself, this may be evidence for the early development of Greek democracy (ibid. 207). Gschnitzer's examples of non-preparatory councils seated in the midst of the assembly may reflect the

entire host who went to Troy, a bandy-legged, hunchbacked pinhead whose only talent is to badmouth his betters (ibid. 216-20).

Now he starts to revile Agamemnon in abusive language (*neikee mythōi*), to the chagrin of the Achaeans, accusing him of wanting to continue the war for the sake of personal gain. He further mocks the Achaeans, calling them weaklings and women for not leaving the greedy Agamemnon and returning home: “Then the king would see if the common soldiery was useful or not.” Finally, he calls Achilles a phlegmatic coward for not killing Agamemnon when he took away his prize, the girl Briseïs (Il. 2.221-42).

Odysseus brings an end to his tirade, saying that if he ever hears him hurling such abuse again, he will strip him of his clothing and cane him soundly, whereupon he treats him to a few blows with the sceptre. The unhappy Thersites falls silent and weeps, whereat the rest of the Achaeans laugh heartily, calling this the best of all the feats of Odysseus (Il. 2.244-77).

This scene clearly illustrates the heavy sanctions for breaking the rules of discourse in the agora. Thersites speaks *neikos*, a type of abuse known from iambic poetry, instead of in the elaborate, epic style of the basileis. His abuse is not very different from what Achilles offers Agamemnon in the *First Song* of the *Iliad*, where they argue whether Agamemnon should be recompensed the loss of his prize at the expense of Achilles (Il.1.121-307).⁷² But the verbal abuse between Achilles and Agamemnon is accepted because they are both powerful basileis. Thersites, as a commoner, is not allowed to use such language against the basileis. He is allowed to speak, but must keep his language, and what he speaks about, within the bounds proper to his position. If not, he is subjected to swift corporeal punishment and ridicule in the assembly.

A special point is made of describing his cowardice and physical repulsiveness. With his bad reputation, shrill voice and ugly appearance, he is the worst thinkable political performer. Compared to the handsome, strong heroes of good repute, his disadvantages are

organisation of judiciary collegiums. The balance of power in Homer, however, may have been more democratic than the “heroic” idiom of the epic demands.

⁷² On the distribution of booty in Homer, Hans van Wees says “The customary method of distributing booty is a measure of the integration of the Homeric community” (van Wees 1992, 35). I don’t think this describes the situation at all. The reason why booty is collected in “the town-square” to be distributed by the basileus, who leads the army, is that this is his personal property. As war-leader and initiator to the raid he reaps the profit from the undertaking, whereas the actual payment of the crew is in food and wine. But the basileus may only stay basileus as long as he is generous, and therefore he redistributes the booty among his adherents. The whole campaign may be seen as a series of investments, first of food, wine and gifts made by the basileus to get a crew, then as the crew help the basileus to get riches, these riches are invested into feasting to get more crew, or distributed as gifts to gain followers and friends. This explains the bitter attacks on Agamemnon, both from Thersites and Achilles, that he is stingy and greedy. A feeling of not getting one’s proper share would not be extraordinary in such a redistributive system, and accusations of stinginess or greed posed a serious threat to a leader’s position.

disastrous, and his appeal to reassess the worth of the common soldiery falls flat on its face. Even the other Achaeans agree that he is an obnoxious braggart, and heed his words little.

Kurt A. Raaflaub (1988 [2004]) interprets the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, the army wanting to lift the siege, and the harangue of Thersites as expressions of general dissatisfaction with the king (Raaflaub 1988 [2004], 30). The assembly scene in the *Second Song* of the *Odyssey*, is read as giving vent to a low opinion of behaviour typical of noblemen: The respected Mentor upbraids the community for not restraining the suitors in Odysseus' house, admonishing them to take communal responsibility. Raaflaub argues that this is the earliest case of a causal relationship being observed on a primarily political level, and applied to a political issue (ibid. 31-2).

Although protests against kings and nobles in Homer may indicate that 8th century Greeks responded to social grievances through political institutions, there were obvious limits to how this might be expressed. In the Thersites-episode, the rules of discourse in the agora are illustrated: Anyone is free to speak, but what he says must be in correlation with his rank. Those of higher rank are free to censor utterances from commoners. The speech is a performance, in which appearance and character are important ingredients. If one fails in this performance, immediate punishment will be meted out, such as ridicule, abuse or corporeal punishment. The flow of information goes from the boule to the agora, leaving much power with the few basileis who attend these councils. As new suggestions at a late stage in the debate is unpractical, and criticism at any point from a commoner is dangerous, both the boule and the agora consolidate the power of the basileis. Both are arenas for the basileis to show off their superior wisdom and rhetoric, either to each other or to the laoi.

The performative aspect of epic politics is explained in the *Theogony* of Hesiod: He of the basileis the Muses love will have a tongue as sweet as honey, and all eyes will be on him when he passes his fair judgements before the laoi. Be the differences bitter and great in the agora, he settles them unerringly. This is also why basileis have their wisdom; to settle harmful discord quickly when the laoi are gathered in the assembly, with gentle, persuading words. When he enters the agones, they seek to appease him with reverence and gentleness like a god, as soon as he becomes conspicuous among those who are gathered: Such are the gifts of the Muses to mankind (Th. 81-93).

This “musical” side to kingship is what is meant by my analysis of Homeric politics as a question of performance. Martin West, in his commentary to the *Theogony*, finds the introduction of the kings at this point in the *Theogony* strange, as the basileis are not usually regarded as dependant upon the Muses (West 1966, 181-2). But I think that the mention of the

craft of kingship as a gift from the Muses is only natural, as becomes clear in the sequel: The poem continues with praising the singers and poets, and states that they have their power from the Muses and Apollo, whereas the basileis have their power from Zeus. The singer is blessed with a sweet voice, which may lift a worried and recently downcast spirit by singing of the deeds of past men and the blessed Olympian gods (Th. 94-103).

The singers are yet another performing group, whose craft depended on the spoken word and the ability to perform in public. Like for the kings, a honeyed voice and an inspired mind were crucial for the success of their performance; be it relating a tale of things past to a sad and despondent audience, or holding a speech in an agitated and divided assembly.⁷³

Concerning the divine side to political debate and agones, a further excerpt from the *Theogony* presents one more protectress of the basileis: Asteria and Perses begets Hekate, the goddess most honoured by Zeus. Zeus gave her gifts, and a part in the fate of earth and sea, as well as in the starry heaven; she is held in awe by all the gods. She sits by the side of revered kings when they pass judgement, and helps men succeed in the assembly and attain honour. Also, she protects the warrior in battle, especially the cavalrist. Hekate is the bestower of victory and honour in athletic competitions (Th. 409-52).

This illustrates how politics and justice were seen as agones, related to both warfare and sports. To succeed and attain honour were important incitements for participation in politics. Hekate was the protectress of agonists. Whereas the Muses gave the basileis eloquence and charisma, Hekate protected them in the midst of action. The performance of politics could be just as dramatic or straining as a war or an athletic contest.

3.4 Sumerian, Akkadian and Hebrew political institutions relating to Homer

Three other cultures come to mind when discussing the Homeric political institutions. The first is the political discourse revealed in the much older Sumerian epic of *Bilgameš and Akka*, with a system of two assemblies (*ukkin*), one of elders and one of the assembled army, to which the king must go to ratify his decisions. The king cannot act independently of both of these assemblies, but is bound by the decision of one of the two.

⁷³ Martin West sees a possible connection between the honeyed words of basileis and *aoidoi* and the Mead of Inspiration known from Norse mythology or the honey related to prophesy (West 1966, 183). This is an intriguing notion, which might also point to the important role of consuming alcohol in a range of ancient assemblies. Alcohol, eloquence and inspired debate are a well-attested triad in the history of politics.

The second is the Akkadian *puhrum*, or assembly, which is a court of commoners assembled by the king. It also designates the assembly of the gods. *Puhrum* is the Akkadian equivalent of the Sumerian *ukkin*.

The third is the judiciary council of elders from the much younger *Book of Ruth* in the Old Testament. The plaintiff assembles the institution *baša'ar* at the city-gates from passers-by.

The reason for examining these institutions and comparing them to the evidence from Homer is to reach a better understanding of how ancient assemblies worked, and how their political role evolved with the development of the city-state. The Homeric assemblies were the structural forerunners of the Athenian Council and the Assembly, the main political institutions in Athenian democracy. Similarities between Homeric and Ancient Near Eastern assemblies may argue in favour of Ancient Near Eastern influences on the development of Athenian democracy.

3.4.1 Council and assembly in Sumerian epic

A dual assembly system was probably in use in the Sumerian city-state Uruk at some point in its history, as testified by the short epic *Bilgameš and Akka*.⁷⁴ The story is known from texts excavated in Nippur, which are dated to the first half of the second millennium BCE. The date of the actual composition is not known, but it is assumed to antedate the Ur III period.⁷⁵

The story of *Bilgameš and Akka* deals with a war between the city-states Uruk and Kiš, probably over water and the control of the irrigation system. Bilgameš goes to the elders of Uruk and proposes war against Kiš, and to complete and secure the water supply without yielding to the enemy (3-8).⁷⁶ The assembled elders of the city (*unken-ga-ra ab-ba-uru-na-ka*), however, opt for yielding to Kiš, and for a completion of the irrigation-systems without hostilities (9-14). Bilgameš is displeased with this answer, and goes to the assembly of young men in the city capable of carrying arms (*unken-gar-ra guruš-uru^{ki}-na-ka*). He repeats his proposal in their assembly (18-23). This assembly (*ukkin*) agree unanimously to make war on Kiš, and it extols the glory of Uruk and their king Bilgameš (19-39). The war then proceeds.

⁷⁴ The Sumerian text has Bilgameš. The hero is perhaps better known under the name Gilgameš.

⁷⁵ According to Dina Katz (Katz 1987, 111).

⁷⁶ The text referred to is that of Römer 1980, 23-37, with lines as there given throughout (for complete translation; *ibid.* 38-41). *Unken* is another way of transliterating *ukkin*.

The Sumerian city-states in southern Mesopotamia are the first urban societies known. They were dependant upon artificial irrigation. Already from the 3rd millennium BCE, written sources tell us about a bureaucratic society with a redistributive economy, also seen in the archaeological finds of large communal buildings and standardised ceramics for rations. As agriculture in southern Mesopotamia is only possible with an irrigation-system, the control of water was the control over life and death. The importance of the city Kiš can probably be attributed to its strategic location on the Euphrates, and the vital role of water for irrigation. Supplying water was a task dependant on the co-operation of many city-states, and struggle for the upper hand in such alliances was frequent.

The most important communal undertaking within the city-state beside the military defence of the city's territory was the digging and maintenance of canals. Such common undertakings and the subsequent need for organisation of work probably formed the basis for political hierarchisation in early societies. The inhabitants also built huge structures dominating the cities. These communal buildings, understood as either palaces, temples or both, formed the focus of a redistribution-system, in which the farmers delivered goods which were later distributed as rations to specialised craftsmen and workers on communal projects.

But even though this economy allowed individual families and groups to grow in importance over others, through their positions as priests, work-leaders and war-leaders, the common people were not slaves or unfree in a political sense. The decisions of the city, at least in the epic texts, are frequently reached by an assembly (*ukkin*), at which the king (*lugal*) is subject to the populace (Jacobsen 1957 [1970], 137-38).

Diakonoff (1974) argues that the village communities of Early Dynastic Sumer were governed by popular assemblies and councils of elders (Diakonoff 1974, 8). The council of elders probably represented the nobility of the Sumerian communities, i.e. members of the administration, including the rulers and the most important priests, who owned large estates. The assembly represented the common members of the communities, who had plots of community land in family possession (*ibid.* 9). The organs of community self-government seem to have shared power with the king in some cases. They are called council of elders (*ab-(b)a uru*, AB+ÁŠ *uru*) and the assembly of all able-bodied men (*guruš uru*, or *meš*). Diakonoff states that both organs were called *unken*, which he translates as “circle of the people” (*ibid.* 10). The kingdom of the gods is similarly ruled by a king conjointly with a council of elders, as is the Netherworld. In Babylonia in the times of Hammurapi, the council of Elders (*šībūtum*) and the popular assemblies of a city (*ālum*, *kārum*, *puhrum*) or of a city-

ward (*bābtum*) still played an important role in state life. They were now reduced to organs of the local administration (ibid. 11).

Even though most scholars believe early Sumerian politics indeed had two assemblies, some scholars, among them Dina Katz (1987), are sceptical because the assembly of young men is not very well attested. Normally, the dichotomy is between the assembly as such and the elders, and not a specific assembly of young men. The *guruš* are the members of an age-group that made up the work-gangs and military units (Katz 1987, 107-108).

Gebhard J. Selz (1998), however, analyses *ukkin* as a composite of *uḡ* + *kiḡ*, i.e. “people, humans” + “work”, which would mean that the original word for assembly was actually a description of its members, the young men performing public tasks. Later, the word got the general meaning assembly. Bilgameš/Gilgameš may have originally been the leader of such a troop. The council of elders may be a younger institution in Sumerian politics, perhaps introduced by Semitic peoples (Seltz 1998, 317-318). In the Uruk-lists, which are lists of professions, an official is called the GAL:UKKIN_a or UKKIN_a, which should be read /kingal/, i.e. “the great one of the assembly; the leader of the work-men” (Seltz 1998, 301-305). Seltz uses this evidence to argue that an element new to the Sumerian concept of royal rule is abroad in this story: The Sumerian bureaucratic-sacral leadership is overtaken by the Akkadian dynastic-charismatic concept of kingship. Instead of the *en*, the traditional priest-king of the temple, we meet the *lugal*, the warrior ruler. Gilgamesh is known from the Sumerian King List to have been succeeded by his son (*SKL* col.iii, 21-3). The evidence would then point to a new way of organising power: The king bases his power on the army, and has two bodies of consultants, the elders and the assembly of the army. The position of Gilgameš is strengthened in the story; he becomes *lugal* through the intervention of the army. His son inherited the kingship.

The scenes from *Bilgameš and Akka* make clear that the king had to confront the body of citizens to decide on important affairs of state such as declaring war. Even though he ignores the decision of the elders, he can only do so after consulting the army (Jacobsen 1957 [1970], 137, n. 11). The process of deliberation is not elaborated, and the tone is one of unity and determined purpose on freeing Uruk from the control of Kiš.

Fritz Gschnitzer (1984 [2001]) argues that there is evidence indicating that the Homeric kings, the basileis, owe their power to the people, and have to answer to them in the assembly. The people own the land which the king rules (Gschnitzer 1984 [2001], 184). Their *geras*, i.e. mandate to rule, is granted by the people (ibid. 185).

I argue that the specific dualism of the council and an assembled army is quite similar to what is seen in the Iliad: The laoi are not only fighters, they perform other work as well, as when they build the massive wall to protect the Achaean camp (Il. 7.433-463). In early Sumerian times, there were no actual difference between work-gangs and military units, since there were no standing army and the members of these units were recruited from the same age-group (cf. Selz 1998, 313).

The dual system of a council of elders and an assembly of the army has later parallels both in the Achaean camp at Troy and the city of Troy itself. The Achaeans have a clear dual structure of council (*boulē*), where the king and his seven chieftains discuss plans and make decisions, and assembly (*agora*), where general problems are discussed and decisions are announced. The Trojans have a council of the king and the seven elders discussing by the city-gates, and an assembly of both young and old in front of the gates to the palace of Priamos. Whereas Gilgameš is the young and energetic king pressing for war, Agamemnon is a seasoned war-leader in a deadlocked conflict. Priamos is the old king trying to wait out the Achaean siege, but he also takes decisions on attack or truce. But all three kings have to consult their people and counsellors in public assemblies.

Victor Ehrenberg denies that there may be any similarities between Sumerian assemblies and Greek democracy. In his view, the Greeks were the first political people in the history of mankind. The rule of the majority was the final goal of Greek constitutional history since the days when the *hoplitai* became the *politai* (Ehrenberg 1965, 264 and n. 1 and 2). With reference to Aischylos' *Suppliants*, Ehrenberg challenges the view that democracy only existed since the coining of the term proper in the middle of the 5th century. What seems to be a working democracy in the mythical world of tragedy is analysed as modelled on contemporary Athens (ibid. 266). "The essential constitutional facts are that the form of government is strictly opposed to autocratic monarchy, that the ruler depends on the decision of the people and is responsible to them, that he leads the people by his oratory, and that a decision in the assembly is reached by taking a vote through a show of hands" (ibid. 273).

With Ehrenberg's definition of a democratic constitution, it is difficult to see in what respect the Sumerian assemblies are structurally different from Greek assemblies. Apart from the reference to taking a vote through a show of hands, which was no important part of Athenian democracy, the structure of power seems quite similar. In *Bilgameš and Akka*, the king speaks in front of the assemblies of the elders and of the army, their approval of his proposals is necessary to ratify his actions, and there is an open discussion on city-state politics.

M. I. Finley is certainly right when he says that every city-state government consisted of a larger assembly, a smaller council or councils and a number of officials rotated among the eligible men: “The tripartite system was so ubiquitous that one may think of it as synonymous with city-state government” (Finley 1983, 57). True, a city-state government does not necessarily imply democracy. But the similarities in the dynamics between people and ruler in Greek and Mesopotamian city-states are a challenge to the view that the Greeks were the first political people in the history of mankind.

The dual assembly-system is a central to the political systems of the Achaeans, the city of Troy and the city of Uruk. The elders seem to play a more important role at Troy, where Priamos himself is old and leads the *gerontes*. Agamemnon is leader over the *Argeiōn hēgētores ēde medontes* (Il.2.79); “the chiefs in war and rulers of the Argives”, and thus heads the council of war, which is no council of elders proper. Bilgameš belongs to neither elders nor common warriors, but needs the consent of one of either part to carry out his decisions as king and war-leader. In all three systems, however, popular consent or at least public announcement of decisions play an important role, and this reveals a continuity of these kinds of institutions from the earliest urbanised societies of Sumer to the Archaic Greek world.

3.4.2 The Akkadian *puhrum*

The Mesopotamian cities had judiciary courts referred to as “assemblies”. The Akkadian word is *puhrum*, and it is used in translation of the Sumerian *ukkin*. These were courts of law, and their activities are evident from texts throughout the entire Mesopotamian history. The trials were public, either before the entire city or a part thereof. *Puhrum* means both gathering of people and institutionalised assembly, and there are many uncertainties concerning the details in its composition, procedures and areas of competence (van de Mieroop 1997, 121). It is not altogether clear who sat in the *puhrum*, either. Many scholars claim the assemblies consisted of free male citizens, but in Akkadian, terms for free and citizen are not easy to define.

From the *Codex Hammurapi*,⁷⁷ it is clear that judgement was passed in the assembly: A judge who stands accused of misconduct in office, and is found guilty, shall pay a fine and be expelled in the assembly (*ina puhrim*) from his office as judge (Cod. Ham. §5). Punishment is also meted out in the assembly: A citizen guilty of striking a citizen superior to himself on the cheek, shall be whipped in the assembly (*ina puhrim*) (Cod. Ham. §202).

⁷⁷ Hammurapi was king of Babylon in the first half of the second millennium BCE.

A text from Nippur, dated to the early second millennium, tells of a trial for homicide, in which the king Ur-Ninurta orders that the case should be decided before the assembly of Nippur (*pu-úh-ru-um Nibru^{ki}-ka*).⁷⁸ A group of nine people of various trades address the assembly and accuse the three culprits and the wife of the deceased, and a discussion follows. The assembly then passes the verdict (Jacobsen 1959 [1979], 193-214). From the composition of the assembly, it is clear that commoners had the right and leisure to participate in the puhrum. Subdivisions of cities also had their assemblies, but their composition is not clear (van de Mieroop 1997, 123-5).

The composition of popular courts from free citizens is remarkably similar to Greek jury courts, although the lack of details makes further conclusions uncertain. Since the king obviously might decide whether a puhrum should be assembled or not, it would seem to differ from the democratic jury courts of 5th century Athens. On the other hand, both the boule and agora of the Homeric poems are gathered by the kings, and in principle the Akkadian puhrum is a check on autocratic rule. However, the parallel between the chastisement of Thersites for abusing his betters (Il. 2.244-66) and the Babylonian punishment for hitting a superior citizen (Cod. Ham. §202) is evidence for the maintenance of social hierarchy through democratic institutions. But in principle, the citizens are judged after a discussion in public, and common people are accusers and participants in the debate. The relationship of the nine accusers to the deceased in the case discussed above is not clear, but it seems like anyone might report a case for judgement in the assembly. The general right to bring a case before the court was an important democratic principle in Athens after Solon.

3.4.3 The Hebrew *baša'ar* and the Trojan *boulē*

A council of elders passing sentences in the city-gates is found in the Old Testament (Ruth 4.1-4; Am. 5.10, 5.12), and though these sources are rather late (perhaps 5th-4th century BCE), the institutions they describe are probably ancient.

In Ruth 4.1-4, a certain Boas wants a court-decision on behalf of Naemi the Moabite, the wife of his deceased brother Elimelech. The case in question is the sale of a field inherited from her husband, which should be bought by a relative and heir to stay in the family. Boas goes to the gates (*haša'ar*) and sits down, bidding the heir to do the same (1). Then he picks ten of the city elders (*ziknej ha'ir*) and bids them sit down also, which they do (2). He presents his case for the heir and the elders, asking him whether he is willing to buy the plot

⁷⁸ The text is in Sumerian, but uses the Akkadian term for assembly.

or not. Boas says he wanted to ask him before the inhabitants (*hajošebim*) and the elders of his people (*ziknej 'am*), and hear his opinion. The heir then agrees to buy the plot (4).

The function of the council of elders is to witness an agreement, and this is done in a public space, in the city-gates. There are many instances of courts being seated in the gates, which also served as the market place.⁷⁹ In the Old Testament, appeals go out not to tread on the wretched in the city-gates (Pr. 22.22), which is a warning against denying justice to the poor. The evil ways of Israel include hating the righteous in the gates, despising him who tells the truth (Am. 5.10). Obviously, corruption was a problem in such jury-courts. The elders by the gates were a permanent institution, and it was possible to direct complaints to them, whereat they could summon the delinquent to have a talk with him (Dt. 25.7 ff.). The judges and elders cooperate to solve difficult cases of homicide (Dt. 21.2-4; 23.4).

The elders not only serve as a court, but also act as a forum of deliberation, deciding on important matters for the people. Moses summons the elders of Israel (*ziknej jisrael*) to bring them the messages from God (Ex.3.16; 4.29). They decide whether they will accept the Commandments or not, and apparently, they formed the highest authority among the wandering Israelites. During and after the Kingdom, the council of elders continued to play an important role in the cities of the southern Levant. They form the nobility or magistrates.

The verb for passing judgement, *šapat*, means both “to judge” and “to rule”, and these two functions go together in the phrase “to rule us and give us justice” (*lešapteno*), which is the mandate of the judges and kings of Israel. The verb for God’s judgement, *din*, also means to rule or govern. What is just or right is *mišpat*, the nominalization of the verb *šapat*, and includes custom, norm and law. It is a synonym of *chok*, which means “law” or “commandment” (especially of the word of God). Thus, a significant aspect of the ruling power was the administration of justice, which lay in part with a council of elders seated by the city-gates.

The casuistic formulation of Hebrew and Greek laws, for example the Covenant and the laws of Gortyn, also show similarities: Absolute law is not a concept; justice is given through laws regarding specific transgressions (Segert 1973, 163-164). The conceptual system for a democracy was apparently lacking in Syro-Palestine (Ahlström 1995, 588). But there obviously were judiciary institutions where the people took decisions. The people were also consulted on political matters.

⁷⁹ The Hebrew term *baša'ar* i.e. “by the gate”, has become the modern word bazaar. Cf. the dual function of the Greek agora as marketplace and popular assembly.

In Kings I, 12, the successor of the king Salomon, Rehabeam, first consults the elders (*hazikenim*) and then the young men (*hajeladim*), to ask advice on how to react to public demand for an ease on restrictions and burdens. Rehabeam takes the advice of the young, to impose even harsher rules, which result in the ten tribes leaving him and choosing Jeroboam for their king instead.

The dual assembly in I Kings, 12 has received much attention. According to Abraham Malamat (1963), the two assemblies seem to constitute rather formal bodies of official standing in the kingdom. It is a bicameral assembly, similar to the Sumerian “primitive democracy” known from the Sumerian epic *Bilgameš and Akkaa* (Malamat 1963, 250-1). The king was dependent upon the support of these political bodies, which assisted in carrying out his decisions. They correspond to the role played by the *'dah* in pre-monarchic Israel (ibid. 252). Malamat equals the Sumerian *guruš*, i.e. young men, to the Hebrew *jeladim* (ibid. 253).

Against this, D. Geoffrey Evans (1966) claims that *jeladim* refers to the sons of the king, whereas the “elders” are the brothers of the king. The *zikenim* and *jeladim* were no political bodies of official standing, but rather advisors without decisive power (Evans 1966, 277). Evans acknowledges the important political role of assemblies in Uruk (in Sumer in the middle 3rd millennium) and their correspondence with political structures in Carthage. He argues that the real parallel is between the Hebrew *qahal jisrael*, i.e. the assembly of the people, and Sumerian *ukkin*, the assembly. He sees no basis for a comparison between *guruš* and *jeladim*, because the former were ordinary citizens, whereas the latter were members of the royal family (ibid. 278).

As already mentioned above, the Trojan boule consists of a council of elders sitting by one of the city-gates debating with each other (Il.3.145-154). Even though Priamos is king, they all seem to be on equal footing, discussing freely. This seems to be similar to what is known from the southern Levant in the Iron Age, the *ziknej 'am baša'ar*, i.e. the elders of the people in the city-gates, or at the market place. Sometimes, the council is a board that hears a public statement, making it legal by their ratification. But as is demonstrated above, the elders could also take a more active role as legal persecutors, or act as a forum for political debate. Their actions are neither restricted nor controlled by an external authority.

The tri-partite division of authority in ancient city-states seems to include polities in Sumer, Babylon, Israel and Homeric Greece. A popular assembly in combination with a council ruled together with the king. This should indicate that the introduction of radical democracy in Athens was not a complete break with all previous political culture and tradition, but a continuation and development of already existing practices.

The emphasis of this comparison is on structural similarities. Interaction between Greece and the Levant in the Iron Age, however, suggest that a direct influence cannot be ruled out: Greek political institutions may have been influenced by political developments in the Levant in the Iron Age.

3.5 Are the Homeric political institutions historical?

Few scholars believe a historical Homeric world ever existed. Snodgrass (1971) calls the Homeric political and societal structure an artificial mixture of different periods, probably from epic traditions from Mycenaean times and the 8th century. The political and military status of the king could equal that of the migratory period of the LH IIIC, as is known from the Pylos-tablets. Then, the king was called a wanax and lived in a megaron with a large household, and had many treasures (Od. 4.71-5). His power could be threatened by other basileis, and his authority was not supreme in the assemblies and councils (Il. 1.57-303). The army was not under his direct command in war, the different contingents being lead by independent commanders, representing a danger to the authority of the king (Snodgrass 1971 [2000], 389).

Robin Osborne (1996), on the other hand, calls the Homeric kings a literary concept, useful to Homer for illustrating the problems he wanted to discuss. The kings are carriers of values rather than historical, political actors (Osborne 1996, 151). The political structure in Homer is a non-historical composite (ibid. 153).

Kurt Raaflaub (1997) argues that Homeric society was a tale of the past told to the present (the 8th century); it had to be modern enough to be comprehensible, but archaic enough to be plausible (Raaflaub 1997b, 628). He regards the Homeric polis as an early forerunner of the Classical polis (ibid. 629): There is a public sphere, in which commoners are also involved. The individual was identified by his affiliation with a polis. The heroes were expected to take responsibility for the polis (ibid. 632).

Ian Morris (2000) regards the Homeric Epics as good sources for 8th century Greek society, even though it is impossible to think away the poetical construction and reach a description of a specific, historical society. The heroic world was part of the elite ideology of the 8th century (Morris 2000, 172-173).

Dealing with the Homeric epics as a purely literary construction, composed by a free artist with no regard to tradition, creates some problems. Since the discovery by Milman Parry of the tradition of oral poetry that must lie behind the Homeric epics, the aspect of

performance before an audience must be taken into consideration. Homer couldn't make up the kings just because he needed such literary personae for the emplotment of his story. The epics would presumably not have gone down that well with its audience if it was a work of pure fiction, without anything real and important to say about contemporary society.

Mycenaean elements in Homeric society are problematic: As will be argued in the following, the evidence for such elements is slight. The way by which such ancient elements could appear in the works of Homer must be demonstrated. The pre-supposed Mycenaean epic tradition which underlies this hypothesis is not attested, and is not necessary to explain the Homeric epics.

Even though the historicity of the Homeric world is generally doubted, there is a discussion whether the epics contain any information about the Late Bronze Age. Especially the historicity of the Trojan War has been hotly debated, and a new optimistic vogue of "historicists" seem to dominate the "last battle of Troy", sparked by the new excavations by Manfred Korfmann at Troy (Korfmann 2001) and studies in the Hittite materials by Frank Starke (Starke 2001).

Joachim Latacz, building on a recent consensus that Wilusa-Wilios actually was Troy, seems to take indications of conflict between Mycenaeans and Hittites over Wilusa (Ilion) in the Hittite Tawagalawa-letter (mid-13th century BCE) as evidence for a historical Trojan War (Latacz 2001b, 54-57; idem 2002, 196-201). True memories of Bronze Age events may then have been preserved through a Mycenaean epic tradition (Latacz 2001a, 29-30).

Further evidence is gleaned from the comparison of epic formulae and Hittite texts. Edzard Visser compares the formula *Troes kai Lykioi kai Dardanoi agkhimakhetai*, i.e. "hand-to-hand fighting Trojans, Lykians and Dardanians" with Late Bronze Age alliances between the Hittite king Muwattallis II and Alaksandus of Wilusa in the first quarter of the 13th century against Lukka (Lykians). The argument goes that this alliance may have shifted at a later stage, the Lykians fighting with the Trojans against the Greeks. This alliance must be very ancient, given the conservative nature of such epithets (Visser 2001, 85-86).

Manfred Korfmann wants to make the historicity of the *Iliad* plausible through the geography and topography of the reconstructed 8th century site of Ilion. The ruins at the site could well have fuelled the imagination of visitors, making the descriptions in the *Iliad* modelled on a real site, and thus a true story (Korfmann 2001, 71-75). Apart from an intriguing reconstruction of the racetrack of Hektor, there is nothing compelling about this argument.

Wolfgang Kullmann, on the other hand, is negative to any traces of the Bronze Age in the *Iliad*, and elaborates on the reasons for placing the Homeric World in the Iron Age. He points out the purely speculative nature of any reception between Bronze Age Troy and the *Iliad* of Homer (Kullmann 2002, 99).⁸⁰ The *Catalogue of Ships* (Il. 2.484-762), often taken as a tour of the Late Bronze Age world because of the supposedly “forgotten” sites it mentions, is clearly a non-historical hyperbole (ibid. 100). Not only do the number of fighters far exceed anything logistically possible at the time, but some of the sites in the *Catalogue* missing in later writers like Diodoros, have been discovered by archaeologists, making them less mysterious. Kullmann argues that the *Catalogue of Ships* is rather a tour of the poleis of Archaic Greece.⁸¹ Homer barely mentions any Anatolian sites, with the exception of Miletos (ibid. 105).

According to Kullmann, the *Trojan Catalogue* (Il. 2.816-77) is a yet more obvious construct. The peoples listed have very little to do with the Bronze Age, and the Hittites, Luwians, Ahhijawas and Arzawa are not mentioned (Kullmann 2002, 105-6). The Homeric Anatolia would have been recognisable to a 7th century audience, and the geography is quite accurate (ibid. 107-8). But Homer clearly intended to tell a Bronze Age story, and Homeric kings and heroes inhabited the ruins of the Mycenaean palaces (ibid. 109). These kings, however, belong in an Iron Age context and are projections of aristocratic aspirations in a world increasingly dominated by the phalanx and the demos of the poleis (ibid. 110-11). The weapons of bronze are trappings of ancient times, and the notorious boars-tusk helmet is an ancient heirloom (Il.10.261-71). Few other martial elements point to Mycenaean times (Kullmann 2002, 112). The battle described in the *Iliad* may well be modelled on events during the Aeolic migrations and conflicts between Greeks and Anatolians in the 11th century (ibid. 133). Troy is the scene of the *Iliad*, but Homer had no knowledge of Bronze Age events. This means that there is no sense in seeking information about Bronze Age Troy in the *Iliad* (ibid. 137-138).

⁸⁰ He would place the date of the destruction, supported by new analyses of the pottery of Troy VIIa, to Transitional LH IIIB2-IIIC Early, i.e.1210-1190 (ibid. 99, nt. 9). The date of composition of the *Iliad*, he would place in the 7th century based on the mention of the Egyptian Thebes, and diverse elements belonging to Archaic Greece proper (ibid. 98, n. 7 and 8). Walter Burkert places the writing of the *Iliad* at plus/minus 663 (ibid. 103), whereas the sports mentioned in the *Iliad* gives a *terminus post quem* of its composition at 680 B.C.E. (ibid. 104).

⁸¹ Kullmann argues that the *Catalogue* could be modelled on the lists of the routes of the *theoroi* or the *theorodokoi*-lists from the Olympic Games (after 776 BCE) (Kullmann 2002, 102-103). They were the ones who went to invite the poleis of Greece to the Games, and their itineraries were written down and preserved in lists (ibid. 102, and n. 21).

A Mycenaean source for the *Catalogue of Ships* is not successfully proved through linguistic means, either (Kullmann 2002, 124). This brings us further to the linguistic evidence for Mycenaean epic or Achaean elements in Homeric Greek. First of all, *kai*, i.e. “and” is not the Mycenaean word, which is *te* (-qe/k^we). This makes Edzard Visser's supposedly ancient phrase *Troes kai Lukioi kai Dardanoi ...* dubious (see above). Secondly, as demonstrated by Dag Haug, there are very few, if any of the alleged Achaean elements in Homer that cannot be explained better as later linguistic developments (Haug 2002, 41-69). The “Mycenaean” words, morphemes and sounds in the Homeric language can all be found in some other Greek dialect, making the hypothesis of a direct link between Homer and a Mycenaean epic unnecessary (ibid. 68). Even though Mycenaean words are found in Homer, they must have been current throughout the subsequent Dark Age, and their inclusion in epic phrases thus a product of Dark Age developments (ibid. 42).

Any historical information about a battle in the 12th century preserved through over four hundred years of oral tradition until composed and written down by Homer is likely to have become completely warped (cf. the *Mahabharata*). Even though the hexameter of the epics would preserve names and epithets, the constant elaboration on themes and inclusion of local heroes in the story would make any historical core unrecognisable.

Comparisons between Homeric epithets and Hittite documents do not prove the historicity of the Trojan War or the Trojan and Greek alliances. The Homeric material is full of self-contradictions, because the poet probably picked, mixed and manipulated anything to fit the context, which is aptly illustrated by the sudden shift in the above-mentioned alliance between Trojans and Lykians. Another ally of the Trojans, the Phrygians (Il.2.862-863), no doubt belongs to the Iron Age and has nothing to do in a Late Bronze Age context. Besides, they are mentioned as the brothers-in-arms of Priamos in campaigns against the Amazones (Il.2.184-190.) In the epics, Phrygians, Lykians and Amazones are all historical peoples of Anatolia, showing at best the eclectic nature of Homer's method.

There remain few reasons to suppose Homer knew anything about events at least four hundreds years before his own time. The boars tusk helmet in the Tenth Song of the Iliad (Il.10.261-271), the *Doloneia*, is not enough to warrant actual knowledge of the Mycenaean age on Homers part. Apart from that, no knowledge of the Hittites or the Mycenaean civilizations seems traceable in the works of Homer. The world he describes is the Iron Age of the 8th century, with the occasional relic or fossil from older times.

So, even though the answer to the question posed above must be negative, there is much to speak for the use of Homer as a source to Greek history at the end of the Dark Age.

The epics reveal the ideology and opinions about the recent past predominant among certain members of society, and are the key to understand the development of Greek values and ideals in the Iron Age. Together with the structural comparisons above, this should form a good basis for further investigations of how Greek political institutions developed in the Archaic age.

3.6 Conclusion

An important question regarding the development of politics in Ancient Greece is whether the Homeric assemblies are democratic. Having seen the inherent limitations on free speech through the rules of discourse, the emphasis on performance which favours the cultured rich men, and the split in two chambers, keeping many decisions hidden from the majority of citizens, it may be hard to see anything democratic in our sense of the word in the Homeric *boule* and *agora*. However, one must keep in mind the special nature of the epic, being tales of heroism and great deeds, and not of everyday occurrences. The aforementioned *Shield of Achilles* depicts such an everyday scene, and there the *basileis* seem to be absent (Il.18.497-508).⁸² In fact, these kings who play such a major role in Homer are barely attested from historical times. This might mean that the assemblies described in Homer's poetic idiom may be modelled on structurally similar, but functionally different historical institutions. The assemblies were probably more democratic than they seem to be in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Kurt Raaflaub argues that the Homeric assembly witnesses and legitimises communal actions and decisions. The division of booty, as well as the making of political and judicial decisions, take place *es meson*: The middle is the communal sphere (*koinon*), shared by elite and non-elite members of the community (Raaflaub 1997b, 642-3). The council of elders (*gerontes*) is an established institution, and it may be held responsible for communal decisions. The assembly, however, seems to have had a decisive influence on politics. *Demos* and *basileis* share the political sphere (ibid. 642-3).

This interpretation allows for continuity between the Homeric society of the 8th century and the later polis. A leading principle in Homeric politics seems to be an open deliberation on difficult questions, and a decision reached if not by vote, so at least by consent after an open discussion where the different opinions are voiced openly. The other political

⁸² The men involved in the case are said to have come *epi histori*, i.e. "to him who knows the law". Hans van Wees is certain this must refer to the *basileus*, whom he sees as a constitutional monarch (van Wees 1992, 34). I see no reason to suppose this, as the *histor* has no necessary connection with the *basileus*, and refer to judges and witnesses in general. Also, I have problems with him stating that "Homeric monarchs occupy a formal, public, hereditary position" (van Wees 1992, 32). As is seen from the difficulties on Ithaca concerning the succession of Telemachos to Odysseus' position as king, no such formality existed.

institutions discussed, the *ukkin*, the *puhrum* and the *baša 'ar*, work on more or less the same principle, i.e. open discussion in public assemblies without threats or coercion from an external authority. The assemblies work as deliberative and communicative fora, where information is given and decisions are made.

Such fora seem to have the greatest influence in situations where central authority is weak. The tendency throughout the history of the eastern Mediterranean cultures is centralisation in small kingdoms, which for longer or shorter periods of time are dominated by super-regional powers such as Egypt or the Neo-Assyrian or Achaemenid Empire. Kingship seems to be the ideology in the Bronze Age, and continues to be so in the Iron Age in all known cultures in the region. The Greek polis seems to form an exception, even though a form of kingship survived in Sparta, and nominally, in Athens. The tyrants acted like kings. The oligarchic and democratic constitutions of the poleis seem to share much with the Homeric political institutions, as well as showing similarities to Ancient Near Eastern political phenomena. The main question is how did they grow in importance to become dominant in the Greek poleis?

It seems like Greece became a world of poleis out of a long and continuous political development from the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces. Individual basileis rose to prominence as leaders, but their power was linked to cooperation with popular assemblies. The increasing importance of these assemblies, instead of losing power to centralised, dynastic kings, comes as something of a surprise. The kings seem to disappear. This disappearance may be explained, however, from the fundamentally democratic structure of Homeric society, in the sense that power was invested in popular assemblies and councils rather than in kingship. This structure was strengthened and became the basis for the distribution of power in the polis, whereas the individual ruler was unable to maintain a claim to power. This kind of city-state constitution, however, had several parallels from the Near East, and was not an isolated phenomenon. It is possible that the Greek polis developed its democratic institutions under the influence of already established political communities in the Near East, and especially the Levant.

4 Phoenician political and jurisdictional institutions

4.1 Introduction

The Phoenician city-states with their political institutions are frequently compared to the Greek poleis, and even considered to be their possible forerunners or instigators (Gschnitzer 1988 [2001] and 1993 [2001]; Sommer 2000). Unfortunately, little is known about the Phoenician political and jurisdictional institutions themselves. The sources are for the most part quite late, i.e. from Aristotle onwards, and deal with West-Phoenician/Punic politics. This makes it difficult to say anything definite about Phoenician institutions and how they worked in the Levantine Phoenician cities of the Iron Age. One has to steer a course then, between the information available in Aristotle and Polybios on the one hand, and what may be gleaned from the Late Bronze Age Amarna-correspondence and Early Iron Age Egyptian sources on the other. This evidence must then be compared to what is available from Hebrew and Neo-Assyrian sources concerning the political situation in the Levantine coastal cities of the Iron Age. Direct sources from Phoenicia itself are not available, and one is reliant on indirect sources.

4.2 The Levant

The Phoenician kingdoms were city-states, with little hinterland suitable for agriculture and an economic emphasis on long-distance trade. Dynastic kings (*mlk*) ruled these cities, and the functions of the king were political leadership, economic control and sacerdotal functions (Sommer 2000, 240-1). His role as king and judge are difficult to hold apart, since the Semitic semantics hardly discern between these two verbal acts.⁸³ That is why the development from king (*mlk*) to judiciary ruler (*špt*) in Phoenician political history is such a difficult problem, and it will not be addressed here. Officials were personally dependent on the king, but their many different titles known from inscriptions are hard to interpret, such as *skn*, “governor”, *tm* ‘*mhnt*, “camp commander” etc. (ibid. 243).

The assemblies of citizens and merchants probably played an influential role in relation to the king. This is evident for the Bronze Age in the *Amarna*-letters, where the men of these or that Levantine city send letters to the Pharaoh of Egypt, together with the king of the city (EA 100) or alone as a group of citizens (EA 59). In the Syrian city-states of the middle Bronze Age, the name of the city was the same as the name of the state and of the citizens of the city-state (e.g. EA 144, 10-12: Sidon is the Sidonians). In treaties between

foreign kings and Ugarit, “the men of the country of Ugarit” are addressed, and not the king (Buccellati 1967, 56-8).

In the Egyptian text *The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia* (*ANET*³, 25-29), the Egyptian emissary Wen-Amon tells of negotiations with Zeker-Ba'al, the king of Tyre, and of decisions taken by popular assemblies. The text is dated to the early 11th century. In a treaty between the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680-669) and Ba'al I, king of Tyre, the elders of Tyre are mentioned as a council giving advice (Borger in *TUAT* I/2, 158-159).

How these councils or assemblies were organised is unknown, but from similar institutions among the Hebrews known from the Old Testament, it would be reasonable to suggest that they were some kind of council of elders or popular assembly. In Old Testament sources, such councils of elders are frequently mentioned as judges in public judiciary processes that took place in the city gates (Num. 16.2; Dt.21.2-4; 23:4; Ruth 4:1-4).⁸⁴ After the death of Solomon, the future of the kingdom is decided by Rehabeam, who consults first the council of elders (*zikenim*), and then the young men (*jeladmm*) (I Kings, 12). This might indicate a constitution where power is divided between a council, an assembly and the king. Even Elohim himself gives judgement in an assembly of gods (*'dah el*), as in Psalm 82, where he condemns the sons of the most high (*benej eljon*) to mortality for corruption and apostasy.

4.3 Carthage

More information about Phoenician society becomes available only after the Phoenician Mediterranean expansion between the 9th and the 7th centuries and the founding of Carthage. The earliest Carthaginian political institutions (8th-7th century) are impossible to reconstruct, but it was probably a kingdom like the Levantine city-states. At its founding, Carthage was presumably organised like its metropolis, Tyre. Tyre was a kingdom, but councils of elders and popular assemblies also had a say in politics. The later West-Phoenician/Punic constitution was utilised by Greek and Roman political thinkers and historians as basis for comparisons with other constitutions such as the Spartan and the Roman ones. Phoenician institutions are therefore almost exclusively described in Greek and Latin terms, but through comparison with the evidence from the Levant, it should be possible to gain some reliable information from them.

⁸³The verbal root *špt* means both “to rule” and “to judge”.

⁸⁴ Other instances of such councils are probably attested from Anatolia in the Bronze Age: The Assyrian merchants in Karum Kaneš were organised in their own judiciary councils, and seem to have enjoyed an independent position vis-à-vis both the local ruler and their own king. A much later example is the Guilds of merchants, which played an independent political role in German Hanseatic towns.

Aristotle, in his *Politics*, has a favourable impression of the Phoenician constitution, and describes it as an aristocratic-oligarchic one with democratic traits. He compares it to Cretan and Spartan constitutions. As far as he can tell, there had never been any factional strife or tyranny in Carthage. The citizens ate together in *syssitia* like in Sparta, and had a council similar to that of the Ephors. The 104 members of the council were chosen from merit. Kings and senators did not inherit their power, but were chosen from pre-eminent families. The king and the senators presented their proposals to the people, but in cases where they couldn't agree, the people had the right to decide. There was a right of free speech for all in the citizen assembly, as well as the right to hear the opinion of the king and the senators, and even discuss or refute their views. These were democratic institutions. The Carthaginians also had a committee of five members (*pentarchia*) that enjoyed major authority in many cases. The members of this committee continued to have authority outside their terms of office. Officials were unpaid and not chosen by lot. These were oligarchic and aristocratic traits. The rulers were not chosen merely because of merit, but also because of wealth. Kings and generals obtained power in a neither purely aristocratic, nor purely oligarchic, but rather timocratic or plutocratic way. It was allowed that one person might have more offices at the same time (Arist. Pol. 1272b25-1273b26).

Polybios, in his *Histories*, similarly mentions the good reputation of the Carthaginian constitution, in the same breath as the constitutions of Sparta, Crete and Mantinea. There were kings (*basileis*), and an aristocratic council of elders (*gerontion*), and the masses (*to plethos*) made decisions in matters pertaining to them, like in Sparta and Rome. But by the time of the Punic Wars, the constitution had degenerated, so that the people (*ho demos*) had obtained most of the power in making decisions. Because of this, they lost their wars against the Romans who were ruled properly by Senators (Polybios VI.43-52).

4.4 Discussion

In the middle Bronze Age cities of Syria, the people constituted a unity personified in the king. All the Syrian territorial states of the 2nd millennium were monarchies. According to Giorgio Buccellati, the evidence for republican constitutions is equivocal (Buccellati 1967, 64 and n. 173). From the Alalakh and Ugarit archives, it is evident that the position of the king in public life was fundamental (ibid. 67). According to Marlies Heinz, Ugarit, Byblos and other Syrian cities were “gateway-cities”, i.e. crossroads for exchange relations, rather than political

centres (Heinz 2002, 146-7). But Ugaritic terms for political assemblies are attested, such as *phr/puhru*, which means assembly, similar to Akkadian *puhrum* (Tropper 2002, 147). *Phr* renders totality or assembly, and is also used of the assembly of the gods (*phr ilim; phr bn ilm; mphrt bn il*) (Gordon 1965, 468, entry 2037). Ugaritic *'dt*, similar to Hebrew *'dah*, also means assembly, and is used of the assembly of the gods (*'dt ilim*) (Gordon 1965, 453, entry 1814).

Concerning political developments of the Iron Age, Donald Harden states that the Phoenician cities had a regal form of government (Harden 1962, 78). At some point, hereditary kingship ceased, and oligarchy took its place. Councils of elders from the social class of rich merchants began to attain full power (under Persian rule, if not earlier). At Tyre and Carthage, a dual magistracy undertook executive functions. In Carthage there was a senate of 300 members, a committee of 104 members, and a popular assembly. According to Harden, this constitution was due in some part to Greek influence, since it resembles the tripartite division of power found at Athens (ibid. 79). The oligarchy was based on wealth rather than birth (ibid. 80). In Phoenician, the term *mphrt* equals Ugaritic *phr*, “assembly”, as in the phrase *wmphrt 'l gbl qdšm*, “and the assembly of the gods of GBL, the holy ones” (Tombback 1978, 191).

The idea that the Carthaginian constitution is derived from the Athenian is difficult to maintain, since the political system of Carthage resembles that of Tyre, which is evidently much older than the Athenian democracy. Chronologically speaking, it seems sounder to consider Phoenician influences on Greek constitutions than the other way round, as pointed out by Fritz Gschnitzer (1988 [2001]), Michael Sommer (2000) and others.

Fritz Gschnitzer argues that the difference between independent poleis like Athens, Corinth and Miletos, and the “Stammstaat” or “Bundesstaat” consisting of member states, like in Boeotia and Thessaly, indicates that the city-state is a foreign element in Greece (Gschnitzer 1988 [2001], 236). There were city-states in Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Asia Minor since the 3rd millennium, but Gschnitzer maintains that these communities had evolved into greater or lesser monarchies, even empires, by the first millennium, making their influence on Greek state formations unlikely. The only city-states left would be those on the edges of the Neo-Assyrian empires, the Phoenician city-states on the Levant, both spatially and temporally approximate to the Greeks (ibid. 237-8).

Diffusion of the city-state is evident from the Greek and Phoenician colonisation movements, and the subsequent appearance of city-states in North Africa, Italy and Spain (Gschnitzer 1988 [2001], 243). City-states in Lykian and Karian Anatolia are known from the

5th century onwards, as well as from Pamphylia and Cilicia from before the time of Alexander the Great. It is difficult to determine whether the Greeks initially influenced these or not. They might even predate the Greek poleis, and are at any rate equally close to the Phoenician Levant and the Greek Aegean. Also, these Anatolian communities neighbour on the 2nd millennium city-states of the Ancient Orient. Gschnitzer argues that the Greek polis has its origins in the Orient, the city-state spreading in a wedge-shaped pattern with its tip in Greece, rather than the other way round. The lack of city-states in Phrygia and Lydia, contrasted by their presence in Lykia and Karia, may have its explanation in factors such as differences in political and historical conditions and settlement structure (ibid. 244-45).

Gschnitzer argues that the Phoenicians were heirs of the Near Eastern city-states of the 3rd and 2nd millennium. This phenomenon spread to the Aegean, perhaps also to South Anatolia, and further overseas with the colonies of Greeks and Phoenicians in the 8th century (Gschnitzer 1988 [2001], 246). The Greeks adopted the city-state, like so many other cultural traits, from the Orient, in much the same way as they adopted the alphabet from the Phoenicians. These early city-states were organised with a king ruling together with a council and an assembly (ibid. 247). But Gschnitzer maintains that the role of the Greeks was more than just spreading the city-state. The internal political changes from monarchy over aristocracy to democracy in 8th to 4th century Greece is interpreted as a development peculiar to the Greeks. Gschnitzer emphasises that the first democratic innovations took place in 6th century Aegean Greece, when other parts of the Greek world still had elder forms of government like kingship or oligarchy (ibid. 248).

Gschnitzer finds further evidence for the similar structures of Greek and Phoenician city-states in the Greek and Roman authors writing about Carthaginian history. There were jury-courts of many members, like in Greece (Gschnitzer 1993 [2001], 253). The Carthaginians seem to have linked citizenship to active participation in political life, and viewed citizenship as a privilege (ibid. 254). Gschnitzer claims that the Carthaginian army originally consisted of armed citizens, and argues that this is comparable to Greece and Rome (ibid. 255-7). He emphasises that 5th century Phoenician inscriptions frequently refer to the citizenry as a whole, rather than the king or the city as such, as legal part in contracts and treaties. This should indicate that the state was understood as a league of citizens (ibid. 258-9 and n. 20). Gschnitzer takes these late testimonies to Phoenician and Punic political culture as evidence for much earlier political developments, to strengthen his claim that Greek politics of the early first millennium were similar to Phoenician structures (ibid. 260).

The “Stammstaat”, or *ethnos*, was contemporaneous with the polis, and does not seem to have been a more original form of Greek political organisation. Therefore, the polis is unlikely to have been imposed upon such political structures from the outside. The development of the Greek polis is evident in epic literature of the 8th century, and these are the earliest sources to Greek society in the Iron Age. An original substratum like a “Stammstaat” remains a speculation.

The city-state is the result of a political evolution, and this evolution has taken place many times and in widely different places, all of which cannot be connected with each other. The interesting point in Gschnitzer’s thesis is the focus on Greece as a periphery to the Near East. The Phoenician cities were not the last city-states in the Near East, however. In the 1st millennium, as throughout Mesopotamian history, the city-state remained the most stable form of political organisation, and continued to function under the domination of empires. In Babylonia in the middle 2nd millennium, popular judicial assemblies continued to function within the more centralised structures of power. The Syrian and Levantine city-states were ruled by councils and assemblies, even when they were under the domination of the Hittites or the Egyptians in the Late Bronze Age, and later, in the Iron Age, when they were dominated by the Assyrians. The institutions of the city-states were not abolished by the imperial powers, but continued to function within them. This is also evident from Athens under the Macedonians.

It is quite possible that the Greeks were influenced politically by the Phoenicians. They were not dependent, however, on the Phoenicians coming to them. Both Greeks and Phoenicians were actors within the same circles of exchange, and even lived together in settlements of mixed population. Several Near Eastern city-states seem to have been organised along the principle that the citizens equal the polity. This is fundamental for the development of direct democracy. This form of political organisation may have been taken over by the Greeks in the Dark Age, during their interaction with Near Eastern polities. Greek politics may also have been influenced by the close interaction of Greeks and Phoenicians in the 8th century, since the Phoenician settlements abroad were quite similar to the early Greek colonies.

A hypothesis related to Gschnitzer’s ideas is that of Michael Sommer (2000). He argues that there were more or less independent merchants and artisans in the Phoenician city-states in the Iron Age. The palace elite had lost much influence as a consequence of great economic changes in the wake of the cataclysmic Dark Age after 1200 BCE. This gave way to a class of entrepreneurs with a wide mercantile network, boosted by a colonial movement

abroad to the coast of North Africa, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula (Sommer 2000, 205; 209).⁸⁵ This was a prerequisite for a depersonalisation of power. Rule was collectivised within an elite of elders representing the merchant houses (ibid. 246-9). Merchants engaged in long-distance trade formed oligarchies which dominated the city-states, and were organised in councils working together with the king (ibid. 249-53). This constitutional change was a result of an “Ausbettung” of the economic sphere from society as a whole, making way for a profit-seeking class of independent merchant-entrepreneurs. This meant a break with the gift-economy of the Late Bronze Age: It was a turning point “daß Ökonomisch zweckrationales Handeln [...] politische Entscheidungen determinierte” in the Phoenicia of the Early Iron Age (ibid. 262).

Sommer analyses developments in Iron Age history as the results of interaction within a Mediterranean world-system, where the Levant is centre and the Aegean is periphery. The flow of goods and ideas is from East to West, the underdeveloped Aegean communities trading raw materials for prestige goods with Phoenician merchants (Sommer 2000, 54-9; 106-112). The Phoenician expansion into the Aegean led to contact with the Greeks, and caused profound economic, cultural and political changes in the Aegean. Greek culture was changed through acculturation (Sommer 2000, 273-6). This acculturation soon gave way to peer-polity interaction, the Greeks now being able to act on par with the Phoenicians (ibid. 282-4).

The thesis of Sommer is a formalist interpretation of the evidence. However, an “outbedding” of the economic sphere, like he postulates as a pre-requisite for political changes in Phoenicia, is impossible: All economic transactions require learning and trust, both non-economic dimensions. A further element in the thesis is that the Phoenicians discovered means-to-ends-relationships in economic transactions. This seems to be based on the assumption that prior transactions were not rational. The gift-economy of the Late Bronze Age was not irrational; the concepts of competitive generosity and reciprocity lie at the heart of these transactions (cf. the *Amarna*-correspondence). A giving of a gift is not an act based on ignorance of the value of the object given; quite the contrary.

It is difficult to understand how Greek culture could be changed through acculturation to the Phoenicians if there were specific economic developments in the Iron Age which made collective rule in Phoenician cities possible. There is little to warrant an “Ausbettung” of the economy in 6th century Greece, much less in the preceding developments of the 8th and 7th

⁸⁵ On Sardinia, at Sulcis, the Phoenicians also settled inland, and fortified Mount Sirai (Aubert 1993, 205).

centuries. The importance of assemblies and councils are not linked to the rise of independent oligarchies, but rather to the organisation of the city-state as such, where the citizens form a political community. The weakening of the palace-elite in the Levant at the end of the Bronze Age is no doubt correct, but the introduction of a market economy in the Iron Age by Phoenicians who had enriched themselves in Iberia is an anachronism, and structurally impossible.

4.5 Conclusion

The information from the Amarna-correspondence, the Egyptian story of Wen-Amon, the Neo-Assyrian letters and treaties, Aristotle and Polybios is about everything available about Phoenician constitutions and societal structure. It seems like Phoenician society in few respects differ from other known Iron Age city-states of the Mediterranean. The Greek and Roman sources reveal that the Phoenician city-states were not ruled by “Oriental despots”. In certain respects the citizens ruled themselves. These city-states seem to be democratic societies to a certain extent, with a strong inner political dynamic between royal power and democratic self-government.

It seems reasonable to put these constitutional traits in relation to the historically preceding “primitive democracies” of Mesopotamia. Also, it seems not too far-fetched to consider a Phoenician source to certain traits in the Greek poleis. The Greeks got their alphabet from the Phoenicians, as well as many stylistic traits in the arts and most likely in poetry. On the other hand, it might seem risky to explain something that is little known; the origins of the polis and democracy, from something that is even lesser known; the nature and constitution of the Phoenician city-state. Therefore, it is advisable to maintain speculations at a minimum. There is too little evidence to warrant a reading of the Phoenicians as superior cultural missionaries bringing democracy to far-off shores. Even though the Phoenicians were merchants, Sommer too optimistically assays the nature and extent of their trade and its repercussions on their own society. It is far from sure that it had such an all-encompassing influence on the constitution of the city-states themselves. The evidence from Sumerian, Hebrew and Greek sources rather point to the contrary; assemblies and councils might play a decisive political role in societies which were not “merchant oligarchies”.

Nevertheless, the Greeks were not alone in having constitutions, neither were they alone when they created them. The polis fits in with the Near Eastern city-states as part of an evolutionary continuum breaching the Dark Age and continuing into Classical times. Interaction with Phoenicians in the colonies, as well as contact with Near Eastern cultures in

the Levant and Anatolia might very well explain aspects in the development of the Greek polis. More than proving that the Greeks borrowed political institutions or learned about organisational principles from the Phoenicians, the many parallels with Near Eastern polities demonstrate that the polis was no unique phenomenon, and that radical democracy was no unprecedented miracle in an environment of despotic kingdoms.

5 Hoplites and the origins of a politicised demos

5.1 Introduction

In Ancient Greek constitutional history, changes towards democracy are at least partly interpreted as the result of military reforms (cf. Hansen 1993; Bleicken 1995). The hoplite tactics promoted citizen solidarity and emphasised the basic political and social equality of the fighters. The main virtue of the hoplite was to never break the file; to charge forward in closed rank, shield on shield with ones fellow soldiers. The values promoted by such tactics are those of the collective; solidarity, steadfastness and team-spirit. This is in contrast to the Homeric ideal of the *promakhoi* charging valiantly into battle before the mass of ordinary fighters and single-handedly take on as many enemies as possible. The values of these tactics are bravery, heroism, individualism and spontaneity. The two tactics seem perfectly suited to delineate the change from aristocracy to democracy, from rule by the few outstanding heroes to rule by the collective of many.

The idea that military reforms is a prerequisite for political reforms is not a modern one. Aristotle argues that the *politeia* should consist solely of those who carry arms. Therefore a property–qualification should be imposed, so that those who share in the *politeia* are more numerous than those who do not. Aristotle claims that the earliest Greek constitutions after the kingships were composed of warriors, at first the knights. When states became larger, and those with arms became stronger, more people shared in the constitution (Arist. *Pol.* IV xiii 1297 b). Aristotle emphasises the role played by the marine in giving the poorest property-class in Athens, the *thētes*, a say in politics, especially after the Battle at Salamis (479) (Arist. *Pol.* V iv 1304a17). Because these citizens were too poor to afford hoplite equipment, they could only do military service as rowers in the Athenian fleet. The success of the navy meant higher prestige for the rowers, and secured their claims to political influence. Herodotus praised the positive effects of the fall of tyranny on the Athenian war-effort, as each man fought more valiantly when he fought for his own interests (Hdt. 5.78). Political freedom and military prowess seem intimately linked.

The correlation between political rights and military contribution to the defence of the polis is expressed in Weber's description of the ancient polis as a warrior's guild (Weber 1921 [1966], 220). This seems to fit the evidence quite well. Xenophon says of the army of Ten Thousand that they were like a band of colonists looking for land and wives in a foreign country (Xen. *Anab.* III.ii.24-5). Thukydides says of the Athenian expedition to Sicily, that they were prepared as if to establish a new city (Thuc. 6.23). The establishment of colonies

abroad must have been frequently accompanied by violent clashes with the native inhabitants, as is known from the founding of the Theran colony at Kyrene in Libya (Hdt. 4.153-60).

Athenian self-esteem is bound to their ethos of fighting for themselves and the freedom of their polis, as evident from the *Funerary Oration* of Perikles (Thuc. 2.36-39; 41-44). To be a citizen, a polite, one had to be both a self-owning farmer and a hoplite.

This interpretation begs the questions whether it is a causal relationship between hoplites, the polis and democracy. Are there tactics resembling the hoplite phalanx in ancient cultures other than the Greek? The hoplites were among the most popular articles of export from Ancient Greece: Greek mercenaries are attested from Archaic times as far as Egypt, together with fighters like the Karians (Hdt.2.152; 154).⁸⁶ Antimenidas, the brother of Alkaios, returned from fighting among the Babylonians, rewarded with a sword with a haft of ivory and bound with gold (Lobel and Page 350=Z 27). The most famous Greek hoplite mercenaries abroad are probably the Ten Thousand, stuck in Anatolia after the death of their employer, the Persian prince Kyros, son of Dareios II (424-404) (Xen. *Anab*). Thus, hoplites are not specific to the polis-society of Greece. They were as much at home abroad, fighting on foreign frontiers.

Hoplites are attested in Greece before the supposed hoplite reform of the 7th century. Examples of this are the descriptions of fighting in closed ranks in the *Iliad* (Il. 13.130-34; 16.212-17). These are quite similar to the description of marching ranks in Tyrtaios (11.29-34). The emphasis is on closeness, shield on shield and helmet against helmet. There are depictions of fighters marching shield on shield on Geometric vases. Figured scenes with lamentations often contain marching files of soldiers armed with figure-of-eight shields and double spears.⁸⁷ Hoplites are not restricted to the time of Solon and the first political reforms towards a broad citizen basis for participation in politics in Athens.

Hoplite tactics are not restricted to Iron Age Greece: Soldiers in massed ranks with shield locked in shield is found as early as the middle of the 3rd century, in Sumer. The Stela of the Vultures from Girsu/Tello depicts a clash between fighters from the city-states Umma and Lagaš. The fighters are marching in tight ranks, their shields are interlocked, and they are wielding spears (ill. in Du Ry 1979, 58; Hrouda 1991, 74-5). Soldiers in hoplite gear marching in row is evident in the Iron Age from Phrygian paintings, like a painted terracotta screen from Pazarli (ill. in Metzger 1979, 47; Hrouda 1991, 408-9). This shows that the phalanx tactics was not a specific Greek phenomenon.

⁸⁶ Karians and Greeks are attested as mercenaries under Psammetichos I, from 664 BCE onwards. Cf. Ray 1996.

⁸⁷ Ill. in Snodgrass 1971 [2000], 53, dated to Middle Geometric, ca. 770-760.

The evidence does not support the theory of a hoplite revolution restricted to Greece in the late 7th and 6th century. Are there similarities between these other “hoplite-societies” and the Greek polis? Did military reforms cause political changes? Is city-state society based on a hoplite army? Is democracy a result of the phalanx tactics?

The predominance of the military reform theory is perhaps determined by the sources, since the earliest instances of political institutions and ideas of civic unity are found in sources dealing with warfare situations, especially Homer and Tyrtaios. But in the *Iliad*, peasant assemblies are depicted on the shield of Achilles: The gerontes, i.e. elders or judges, are seated on seats of stone, in a circle (*eni kyklōi*). In the middle (*en messoisi*) lie two talents of gold; the prize to him who gives judgement most righteously (*dikēn ithyntata eipoi*) (Il. 18.497-508). In Hesiod, assemblies are mentioned in a civilian context, and the *basileis* are not war-leaders, but judges (*Erga*. 37-41). The tyrant Peisistratos established *dēme* assemblies among the Attic farmers to prevent them from meddling in polis affairs, and nothing indicates that they were organised as military rallies (*Ath.Pol.* XVI.2-5). Are the origins of citizen assemblies to be found in the deliberative organs of the peasant society?

The political division of the Achaean camp into a council of elders, the *boulē*, and an assembly of the army, the *agora*, reflects the urban constitution of Troy. The parallels between this structure of power and what is known of other Near Eastern city-states suggests that this was a widespread practice: Initial deliberation and political initiative belonged to a council, whereas decisions were taken, or at least ratified, by the citizen assembly. It has been argued throughout this thesis that the Greek polis and Athenian democracy form a phase in the development of the city-state, with parallels in the Near East. Did military developments cause democratic changes in the Greek polis? Were the constitutions of the Near Eastern city-states also derived from military reforms? If not, what other evidence is available to explain the emergence of a city-state run by a council and an assembly?

5.2 The polis, the politai and philia

According to the theory of the polis as a guild of warriors, the *hoplitai* make good *politai* because they stand together, united and equal. It is not necessary, however, to reserve equality between citizens to conduct in war. Some civic activities which emphasise the community of all citizens are hard to trace back to a military background. In Athens, the sacrifice of oxen at the Panathenaean Festival and ensuing communal meal is a confirmation of polis identity (cf. Aristoph. *Nephelai* 386-91). Commensality serves to restate and strengthen the bonds between the citizens themselves and towards their city. This is a contrast to the Spartan *syssitia*, which

seem to be modelled on camp-life and solidarity within a group of fighters. Victors in athletic competitions at Olympia, Nemea, Delphi and Corinth were celebrated by their fellow citizens, and shed glory on the polis as a whole (cf. Pindar. *Second Olympic Ode* 89-199; *Third Olympic Ode* 1-4; *Fifth Olympic Ode* 1-8; *Second Pythic Ode* 1-8). The competitive spirit was not restricted to *agōnes* between individuals, but also encompassed relations between whole poleis. At Delphi, the Greek poleis had individual treasuries; they belonged to the polis as a whole. Thus, polis identity found expression outside the martial sphere. There were several mechanisms bonding the citizens to each other, not just warfare.

The main bonding feature of a polis is *philia*, friendship or love, and this seems a more pervading emotion than comradeship in war. Disciplined unity is a virtue of the battle-field, but not anything the Athenians wanted in their everyday life (Thuc. 2.39). Even though Tyrtaios and Kallinos uses the phalanx as a metaphor for the ideal citizen group (Morris 1996, 35), this does not mean that the political organisation of the citizens was modelled on the phalanx. Polis society share traits with its martial extension, the hoplite army, but this does not necessarily mean that the society itself was shaped by martial developments. The status as citizen may have been the reason for the emergence of hoplites to defend the polis, not the other way round: The hoplites existed without the polis, as mercenaries, just like the polis could exist without the hoplites.

Demosthenes specifically admonishes the Athenians to replace the mercenary armies employed by Athens with a citizen army to fight against Philip of Macedonia in 351 (Demosth. *First Philippic* 7,16,19, 23-4). The democracy of the 4th century, after the late 5th century oligarchic revolutions of 411 and 404-3, has been called a golden age of Athenian democracy, a return to the *patrios demokratia* (Hansen 1991, 296-300). Yet the hoplite citizens seems to have been increasingly outnumbered by troops of foreign mercenaries. This demonstrates that a democratic constitution can work without a citizen army, and indeed did so for much of Athenian history. The question is whether the polis was a military organisation in its origins.

5.3 Discussion

The hypotheses of hoplitisisation as a phenomenon in general and as a prerequisite for democracy in particular have been questioned in modern scholarship. Likewise, the hypothesis of Athenian naval power contributing to the development of radical democracy has been met with criticism. The following is a review of these discussions, and an attempt to give alternative explanations of the conditions promoting the development of Athenian democracy.

5.3.1 Warriors, tactics and equipment

Max Weber (1921 [1966], in comparing antique polities to medieval ones, viewed the *dēmes* as the unique foundation of the constitution of the ancient democratic polis. Structures such as liturgical associations formed for military purposes may have been constituent parts in the early polis (Weber 1921 [1966], 202). Ancient democracy rested on the association of free citizens (ibid. 203-4). The peasantry was the foundation of Kleisthenic democracy (ibid. 206). The demos was always ready for raids against neighbours and aggressive expansionism, because this represented a fair chance of getting new land and riches. Increased production at home was never encouraged (ibid. 208). Because the polis preserved the military technique of the war-band, its citizen became a *homo politicus*, in contrast to the medieval *homo oeconomicus* (ibid. 212-3). The political foundation of the city was the military organisation of free citizens, excluding all non-citizens (ibid. 219). From the introduction of hoplite tactics onwards, the ancient polis was a warrior's guild. This was an effect of its active territorial politics. After the defeat of the nobility, citizen-hoplites formed the decisive class of full citizens (ibid. 220). The citizen remained primarily a soldier, and spent his life on campaign and as an active participant in political life (ibid. 221).

A.M. Snodgrass (1965) presents evidence that place the adoption or re-adoption of the constituent elements of the Greek hoplite panoply decidedly before 700 BCE. These elements were a long iron sword and spear, plate-corslet, greave and ankle-guard, the closed helmet of Corinthian type and the large round shield with arm-band and hand-grip. According to Snodgrass, the combination of these elements and their use in massed infantry tactics was an original Greek notion. The full equipment is first shown on Protocorinthian vases of ca. 675 BCE, but depictions of an actual phalanx are hardly attestable before the middle of the 7th century. Therefore, Snodgrass concludes that the adoption of the panoply was a piecemeal process, with no immediate correlation in tactics (Snodgrass 1965, 110). Much emphasis has been laid on the change from a shield with a simple hand-grip to a shield with an arm-band allowing greater freedom of movement. Snodgrass denies that this improvement alone entailed a sweeping change of tactics, as there are parallel examples of the use of such shields which do not include phalanx tactics (ibid. 111). Hoplite tactics were in use in Late Geometric Greece, as evident from depictions of the "hoplite" shield on Late Geometric vases and the inclusion of hoplite equipment among the grave-goods in a Late Geometric grave discovered

at Argos in 1953.⁸⁸ The adoption of the phalanx was probably later, a radical change in the warrior class did not take place with the adoption of the panoply (ibid. 113).⁸⁹

Snodgrass further investigates what scope and effect the introduction of the phalanx tactics would have on Greek society. The hoplite concept is based on landed property: The self-owning farmer must be rich enough to afford his own panoply (Snodgrass 1965, 114). Even though the farmer would have been interested in preserving his own farm from destruction, the inconveniences of actual warfare would probably count strongly against voluntary participation in the defence of the polis. Snodgrass therefore finds it difficult to see the hoplites as the driving force behind a revolution in military tactics or politics, even if (which he doubts) the substantial property owners were promised political power in return for a military contribution.⁹⁰ As evidence, he refers to the poems of Tyrtaios, which he claims reveal how the Spartan hoplites needed constant exhortation to duty in the Second Messenian War (ibid. 115). Rather, the hoplite tactics seem to have been introduced through the action of heads of state, as a measure to defend the realm. Snodgrass maintains that there is no certainty that the hoplites established their leaders as tyrants. The Solonian *zeugitai*, the hoplite class, already formed a distinct group that had earned political power by the time of the reforms in 580. The hoplites served a purpose imposed upon the well-off farmers from the authorities of the polis, before they had any agenda of their own (ibid. 122).

An important contribution to the debate on the introduction of hoplite tactics is the *Kampfparänese* by Joachim Latacz (1977). He opposes the view current among many scholars, that Tyrtaios is an antipode to Homer, and that the two poets represent antithetical societies; the Heroic society and the polis world (Latacz 1977, 26). The introduction of the closed phalanx sometime between the writing of the Iliad and the time of Kallinos and Tyrtaios is supposed to have engendered the introduction of an egalitarian societal structure

⁸⁸ *BCH* lxxxii (1957), 322-86, quoted in Snodgrass 1965, 112

⁸⁹ In the first half of the 7th century, Corinthian and Attic vases depict scenes of fighters in massed ranks, but Snodgrass warns against taking these as sure proof of the phalanx tactics, because similar depictions of fighters in uniform equipment marching in close formations are known from New Kingdom Egypt, 7th century Assyria and Greece before the supposed time of the hoplites. Thus, Snodgrass believes these 7th century Greek warriors represent a transitional phase in the development of Greek warfare, where there are still elements of nobles fighting alone in heroic battle among the ranks of farmer hoplites (Snodgrass 1965, 112-3).

⁹⁰ Comparative evidence from Etruria reveals how, even though the Etruscans adopted the hoplite phalanx, this was not followed by any political change. The Etruscan states were probably still monarchies in the 6th century, and there is no evidence that the introduction of the new tactics created a breach with the unregenerate oligarchic society of Etruria (Snodgrass 1965, 118-9). Likewise, in Rome the hoplite strategy was probably introduced in the regal period, before or during a period of aristocratic rise to power in Rome, which did not include the participation of a recognisable hoplite class (ibid. 120). This goes for Greece as well, the military and political environment of the gradual change to hoplite equipment and tactics being aristocratic or regal domination. A growing class of substantial land-owners would end this dominance, through proving their worth fighting in the phalanx. This was clearly not the case in Rome and Etruria, and needn't have been so in Greece (ibid. 120-1).

based on the masses, with a characteristic emphasis on community values. This process is termed “Hoplitisierung” (ibid. 27). Latacz opposes this view by referring to the societal changes of the 8th century evident in the colonisation movement of the Greeks and subsequent establishment of new poleis: The polis and its community values must have been present before Tyrtaios. The so called hoplite reform followed societal and economic changes, it did not create them (ibid. 28 and n. 12).

The doxa has been that there were no hoplites before the *hoplon*, i.e. the hoplite shield, which was introduced after 680 BCE (Latacz 1977, 35). But archaeological finds of hoplite equipment at Argos, dated to the last quarter of the 8th century, has made the thesis of a late introduction of hoplite equipment and tactics untenable (ibid. 36). The Chigi-vase (ca. 640) shows two rows of warriors confronting each other in phalanx-like formations, but the fighters carry *two* spears together with their hoplon-shields, rather than the expected one. The hoplite phalanx was not introduced at once, but went through a development spanning at least the last quarter of the 8th century to the mid 7th century. This development was not yet finished by the time of Kallinos and Tyrtaios (ibid. 37-8).

Latacz’s method is to look at descriptions of *phalanges* and *stiches* in Homer, to determine whether they may be termed proper phalanges in the Classical sense (Latacz 1977, 44). Phalanx is the technical term restricted to the martial sphere, whereas stix covers the same semantic field, but also covers phenomena outside of that (ibid. 48-9). He argues that the phalanx, rather than being a rare exception from Homeric tactics, was in fact the basic element of Homeric warfare (ibid. 66-7). Latacz finds striking similarities to epic battles in Thukydides (Thuc. 6.69-70), and argues that famous battles like the battle at Syracuse corresponds to epic battle scenes, their description, however, being independent of epic forerunners (ibid. 227). Battles are described similar to epic fighting in Kallinos: There is no use of a closed phalanx of hoplites, but phalanx strategy forms the basis for the fighting (ibid. 232). There are also obvious similarities between tactics in Tyrtaios and Homer. Latacz explains these similarities from a common basis; the three poets describe contemporary battle tactics: Phalanx strategy. The closed phalanx, however, was not introduced at this time (ibid. 234-237). Hoplite equipment and tactics were gradually introduced after 650 BCE (ibid. 238). The similarities between geometric vase paintings and epic battle descriptions support this thesis (ibid. 240-1).

Hans van Wees (1997) reviews the Homeric descriptions of battle, especially in the *Iliad*, to determine the difference between Homeric and Classical warfare and tactics. The consensus until the 1970’s was that a dramatic change in warfare took place between Homer

and the hoplites, accompanied by the rise of the city-state, tyranny and democracy. From 1970 onwards, scholars have questioned this view, stating that there are few significant differences between Homeric and Classical warfare; thus, military developments cannot account for the major political changes in Archaic Greece (van Wees 1997, 668). The terms *phalanges* and *stiches* are usually translated “ranks” and “lines”, but van Wees argues that the Homeric fighters were not arranged in a neat formation, but rather as an amorphous mass (ibid. 675). There seems to be three modes of fighting present at the same time: *Promakhoi* fighting individual duels, ranks fighting hand-to-hand, and a massive hurling of missiles (ibid. 678). There are suggestions that these are two distinct ways of fighting mixed together: Ranks of hoplites and heroes at the same time. Others claim the *promakhoi* are superimposed upon the more realistic massed fighting. A solution might be that the fighting should be divided into phases, where the different elements follow each other in stages (ibid. 679).

The panoply and the massed formation are a part of Homeric warfare, but the use of the formation is limited. A hoplite phalanx is under development in the *Iliad* (van Wees 1997, 691). This corroborates a date of the *Iliad* to 750-700 BCE, or even an early 7th century dating, from the archaeological evidence of armour and battle scenes in vase paintings of the period 700-650 BCE (ibid. 692).⁹¹ The view that the polis, tyranny and democracy are post-Homeric phenomena need revision (ibid. 693).

The Weberian guild of warriors is contested by Snodgrass’ demonstration of the gap in time between the development of hoplite gear and the supposed hoplite-reform. The development of hoplites was a piece-meal process. It seems strange, however, that the elite would impose upon the *zeugitai* to defend the community before it was even centralised. In the epics, the community of warriors seem to be united in their purpose. They resemble a tightly knit political society. But central authority based in a city was probably not well established in the 8th and 7th century, due to warring factions within the elite. That Solon emancipated a broad segment of conscript hoplites in the 6th century seems unlikely. The peasants were probably politically involved on a local level, hoplite shields or not. Their main problem was debt-bondage. Latacz’ deconstruction of the process of hoplitisisation is convincing. Based on similar conclusions, van Wees argues that political phenomena connected to the hoplite strategy therefore may safely be placed in the 8th century. This is, however, to place the same argumentation as that of hoplitisisation some hundred and fifty

⁹¹ It seems dangerous to date Homer from the hoplite reform, since no exact date for the reform is known. It could be argued, from the same evidence that van Wees uses, that the *hoplite reform* should be dated to the 8th century because the phalanx is in use in the *Iliad*.

years back in time. Even if the hoplites were introduced at an earlier date, it does not answer whether the polis was based on a military organisation or not. The structure of polis society as a community is based on the concept of *to meson*, the middle. This is a central concept to understand the political structure of the democratic polis.

5.3.2 *To meson*; the meaning of the middle

Marcel Detienne (1973) points out that in the society depicted by the Homeric epics, the warriors are assembled sitting in a circle. This is also the case during the funeral games of Patroklos (Il. 23.256 ff.), where the prizes are put down in the middle (*es messon ethēke*) (Il. 23.704), and when they are dividing the booty. The main part was distributed in common, before the eyes of all (Detienne 1973, 83-4). Like the prizes at the funeral games, the booty was deposited *es meson*. The booty is given over into the hands of the leader, who represents the collective. The partition takes place in the assembly, and the group retains their right to the booty (ibid. 85). The centre is both what is in common and that which is public. Public speech also takes place in the middle of the assembly, the agora (*stē de mesēi agorēi*) (Od.2.37 ff.) (Detienne 1973, 89). In the epics, the speaker wields the sceptre, a symbol not of personal power, but a signal that he is speaking in the name of the collective, about collective business. This is termed variously *xynēia*, *koinon*, *xynon*, all denoting that which is in common (ibid. 90).

In the diverse institutions, such as deliberative assemblies, division of booty, and funeral games, the same spatial model is imposed. The circular and central space guarantees reciprocal and reversal relations (Detienne 1973, 91). The epic warriors have a right to speak in the assembly. In Archaic poleis, the assembly of the army is a permanent substitute for the people (ibid. 92). The egalitarian status of the warriors finds its social expression in the *dais eisē*, i.e. equal banquets (ibid. 93). The social group of the warrior class becomes the polis, both as a system of institutions and as spiritual architecture. *Isonomia* means to place power in the middle (cf. Hdt. 3.142) (Detienne 1973, 95). The epic pre-political symmetrical and circular space finds its purely political expression in the agora (ibid. 96-7). The difference between public and private affairs in the assembly is evident from the Homeric epics. The same practice is observed in the polis (ibid. 98-9). The change from aristocratic privilege of speech to democratic participation in the assembly is caused by the introduction of the phalanx. The phalanx allowed a democratisation of warfare and the acquiring of political privileges for a much greater number of people (ibid. 99).

Bjørn Qviller [unpublished] maintains that the formation of the nobility as a corporate order is synonymous with the formation of the early polis-society. Qviller analyses this as an internal Greek development: The polis is a consequence of the contradiction between an aristocracy of social equals and a class of exploited landowners and peasants on the other. (Qviller [unpublished], 4-5). The polis found its expression in the formation of a circular and symmetrical space; the agora. The agora plays an important role in the conception of an aristocratic warrior-polis. In Homer, gifts are placed in the middle of the agora (Il. 19.242; 19.172; Od. 2.37). At the sacrifice, the participants stand in a circle (Il. 2.470). In Herodotos, the act of speaking in the assembly is to bring something into the middle (Hdt. 4.97). Political space is called *to meson*, i.e. the middle. It is synonymous with *koinon*, i.e. that which is in common, and is an expression of the polis (Hdt. 7.8; 1.207; 1,67; 5:85; 5:14 etc.). Koinonia, the community, is identical with the collective concerns of the warriors (Qviller [unpublished], 4-6).

The military egalitarianism of the noblemen is expressed in the reciprocal participation in *dais eisē*, i.e. equal feasts (Il. 7.316-320; 1.467-468; Il. 9.225; Od. 19.425; Od. 8.98). A share in the feast and in the booty are the privileges of those belonging to the group of warriors (Qviller [unpublished], 7). The term also covers drinking parties, and the duty to give such parties rotated, as demonstrated by the formulaic expression in the *Odyssey*, “changing from house to house” (Qviller [forthcoming], 50). The early polis has an agonistic character, but the polis also tempered the fierceness of the competition of the Homeric world (Qviller [unpublished], 9). The egalitarian institution of the *dais eisē* foreshadows the evolution of the aristocratic *prytaneion*, the city council of the aristocratic state and its successor, the democratic city-state (Qviller [forthcoming], 49). The egalitarian ideology of the *dais eisē* is important, because it survived after ancestor worship was suppressed. It could provide a model for democracy in spite of the tension between the formal equality and actual hierarchy among the *basileis* (ibid. 51). In the *Odyssey*, Telemachos attends the equal banquets such as a judge (*dikaspolos*) is expected to prepare, and is invited by everyone (Od. 11.184-187). Qviller interprets this as an instance of “reciprocal relations in an early polis after the disappearance of the kings. The context might well be that of a *prytaneia* in an early city state” (Qviller [forthcoming], 51).

The fundamental structure of polis society is attributed to the organisation of the band of warriors. But might not *to meson* be a civilian structure as well, like in the peasant assemblies? The idea of sharing fits equally well with the reciprocal economy of the peasant society described by Hesiod in the *Works and Days*: One should invite one’s good neighbours

as often as possible to a feast, so that they come in haste if anything is amiss (*Erga*. 341-344). Let the neighbour give you in good measure, and give him back equally, or more, if you can, so that you will obtain what you need later, should fortune turn out for the worse (*Erga*. 348-350). Give to he that gives, but do not give do him who does not (*Erga*. 353). According to Qviller, such reciprocal relations served to affirm the relationship between the members of a simple egalitarian community of peasants at the threshold to the Early Archaic Age, and functioned as a form of life-insurance (Qviller [forthcoming], 52). Such relations might, however, be indications of an egalitarian political organisation of the community, independent of the organisation of the army: In the peasant judiciary assemblies, the *basileis* are not war-leaders, but judges (*Erga*.37-41; 247-263). A peasant assembly is depicted on the shield of Achilles, described in the *Iliad*: The gerontes, i.e. elders or judges, sit in a circle (*eni kyklōi*) on seats of stone. Two talents of gold lie in the middle (*en messoisi*) as a prize to him who gives judgement most righteously (*dikēn ithyntata eipoi*) (Il. 18.497-508). This demonstrates that the principle of *to meson* was not restricted to the martial sphere. Egalitarian structures of power were fundamental to early Greek society.

An interesting parallel are the Near Eastern assemblies known from city-states in Sumer; the *ukkin*. *Ukkin* is Sumerian, and is taken to mean “circle of people”. The Akkadian term is *puhrum*, and it is usually translated “assembly” (Diakonoff 1974, 10). In the Sumerian epic *Bilgameš and Akka* the city Uruk is governed by a king, who rules together with a council of elders and an assembly of *guruš*, the young men who perform public works. The king has to consult these two bodies before declaring war. The assembly seems to be the highest authority in the city-state. Similarly, the Levantine city-states were governed by kings in cooperation with assemblies or councils in the Late Bronze Age, known from the *Amarna*-correspondence. Popular assemblies played an important political role in the Phoenician city-states, and the assembly might gainsay the king and council. These are examples of egalitarian assemblies with no martial basis.

Therefore, it seems unnecessary to seek a military explanation for the egalitarian basis of the Greek city-state. Some, however, have sought the origins of the Greek democratic polis in the emergence of a specific political class.

5.3.3 “Mittelschicht” and middle class

Peter Spahn (1977) attempts to define the point at which the *mesoi* or middle group of farmers (Mittelschicht) rise to political and military prominence. He argues that there were no hoplites as such in the 7th century. All instances of hoplite equipment and depictions of phalanges

before or during the 7th century are interpreted as representatives from the elite sporting gear similar to that of hoplites and walking in file. The existence of the phalanx did not lead to immediate social or political change. Farmers probably had little interest in or zeal for hoplite warfare (Spahn 1977, 77-8). The development of hoplites was in stages: First, the gear itself and the tactics were at hand. Second, there arose a “Hoplitenschicht” of middle farmers. Third, this “Hoplitenschicht” became politicised (ibid. 79). Spahn rejects the theory that hoplites were connected to the rise of tyrants in the Archaic poleis, viewing them as forming only a modest part of the troops on each side of conflicts which primarily concerned and involved members of the elite (ibid. 82).

Social stability in 7th century Athens was threatened by incessant rivalry within the ruling stratum itself, and the demos was gradually drawn into these conflicts. This was a step towards isonomia (ibid. 119). Solon stood between the leaders and the people, the rich and the poor (ibid. 121). Spahn asks whether there were two parties, or a “Mittelschicht” between the two. He argues that there was no strict divide between Eupatrids and non-Eupatrids within the elite, neither did the demos form a closed block. Solon united a greater part of the demos around himself, but this group was not a homogenous class (ibid. 132-3). There was a non-political middle between the extremes of the rich and the poor in Athens. This was not a tax class as such, but included members from both the *zeugitai* and the *hippeis* (ibid. 136-7). The process of “Politisierung” of this “Mittelschicht” starts with Solon (ibid. 138). Spahn argues that Solon’s reforms were motivated by a need for hoplites. The hoplite-stratum in his class system were the *zeugites* (ibid. 135).

Spahn argues that the basic problem of the crisis of the kinship group society of Athens was the lacking political involvement of the *Mittelschicht* (Spahn 1977, 139). After the reforms of Solon, the balance of power remained practically unchanged: The nobles were still identical with the wealthiest (ibid. 146). The laws of Solon had a polis-forming function, but there were as yet no *politai* (ibid. 147-8). The only candidates for political participation apart from the old elites were the members of the “Mittelschicht”. Through the reforms of Solon, they were not burdened by debt. In Solon’s poems, they are not politically visible in the time after the reforms. The polarisation of the rich and the poor continued, whereas the *Mittelschicht* pulled out of political conflict (ibid. 150-1).

The reforms could not prevent stasis nor tyranny, and any broad participation in politics is first evident by the reforms of Kleisthenes. In the fight against the tyrants and the Spartans, the *Mittelschicht* proved their prowess as hoplites and therefore stated their superiority over the nobles. Kleisthenes demonstrated the potential political power of the

hoplites, also to themselves. The demand for *isonomia* now came from the demos (Spahn 1977, 166). Spahn points out that the “Politisierung” of the broad “Mittelschicht” had its origins on the level of the demes and small politics (ibid. 167). The “Mittelschicht” transcended the dynamics of power inherent in the kinship society, and their dominance put an end to stasis and rivalry within the Athenian nobility (ibid. 173).

Ian Morris emphasises the importance of belonging to a phalanx for the self-image of one of the *metrioi* or *mesoi*, the ideal citizen. But he separates this ideal of being in the middle from an economic “middle-class” or a hoplite “Mittelschicht” (Morris 1996, 22). He criticizes the view that a hoplite reform around 650 gave new power to an economic “Mittelschicht”, granted by aristocrats to well-off farmers who had proven their martial prowess. The poor were likewise given political influence for their effort at Salamis in 479, acknowledged through Ephialtes’ reforms in 462/1. Morris maintains that the concept of a social and political middle, *to meson*, is linked to peasant attitudes. This means that the concept of equality may have encompassed all citizens, not only those wealthy enough to afford hoplite equipment (Morris 2000, 161-2).

Polis society was based on ideas of communality, this was not a 5th century innovation. The appearance of a “Mittelschicht” is unnecessary to explain a development towards democracy. This kind of middle class is often invoked by political writers, calling for *hoi mesoi*, the moderate middle, to temper the extravagances of the very poor and the very rich. Such a group, however, probably never existed, at least not as a recognisable political segment of society. Local politics was organised among peasants in the demes, and this formed the basic political “schooling” for most Athenians. Experiences from these local assemblies probably counted more in the development of democracy than hoplite tactics and skill at walking in file.

The elite was small, and there were no Athenian kings in the 7th and 6th centuries. Limited resources for the maintenance of ostentative spending led to a revision of attitudes regarding behaviour within the elite. The adoption of “middle values” by the elite is a phenomenon which tempered obvious elite competition. Legislation further hindered public demonstration of wealth to gain followers. The wealthy had to sponsor the polis in order to show off. This led to increased political unity in the city. There were periods of elite struggle, however. This must have put civic life under severe strain. It even jeopardised Athenian autonomy. After the fall of the Peisistratids, an end to elite feuding was brought about through the protest of the demos. Future conflicts were avoided through the reforms of Kleisthenes.

5.3.4 Blood, property and performance

Victor Ehrenberg (1965) wrote about Greek politics from what might be termed a traditional view of the development of the polis. The early Greek state formations are considered to be dominated by the different *ethnē*, the German rendering of *ethnos* being “Stamm”. These ethnē formed state-like societies centred on sanctuaries (Ehrenberg 1965, 109). The polis was already an accomplished form by 600 BCE, and its development was well underway in the 8th century. The most important step in the shaping of the polis was the end of revenge killings and taking the right into ones own hands on part of the elite, giving in to a superior judicial force; the polis society. *Nomos* became king (ibid. 110).

The process of making the politai equal the hoplitai was among the symptoms of a social change: Wealth instead of birth became the scale for political rights and the constitution. This development was amplified and accelerated by the tyrants. They rose to power as leaders of the demos and broke the monopoly on power held by the nobility. The *aisymnetes* did the same in a legitimate way, as chosen by the conflicting factions of the polis (Ehrenberg 1965, 131). Census groups, timocracy, military service as a condition for citizenship and a limitation of the number of citizens and seats in councils were all new and important traits in the governing of the polis in the early 6th century. The development of the polis was marked by a will to egalitarianism and an extended citizenry; constituent parts of democracy. Ehrenberg views the development from one constitution to another as an organic process, but sees a theoretical prerequisite in the idea of isonomia (ibid. 132).

Kurt Raaflaub (1996) maintains that Athenian democracy was a singular phenomenon linked to the events of 462/1 and the developments preceding these reforms. These social and political circumstances were created by military developments, including the Athenian successes in the Persian Wars and subsequent imperial strategies, and the reliance on the poor as rowers in the fleet (Raaflaub 1996, 149). The polis was based on a community of landowning farmers, and in times of conflict their mode of defence was a phalanx of hoplites. Raaflaub sees the evolution of polis society in connection to the ethos of equality among those fighting to defend the community (ibid. 152). This egalitarian structure might be weakened in periods of stability, but become actualised in situations of crisis, such as colonial ventures. The isonomic structure of the early polis (8th century) was based on the link between land ownership, military capacity and participation in communal affairs. The actual development towards democracy was only possible with the military participation of the thetes in the Athenian fleet (ibid. 153). Reliance on naval power was condemned by Plato (*Laws* 4.707a-d,

cf. Gorgias 519a) (ibid.171, n. 133). The *nautai* continued to be considered inferior to hoplites and cavalry even after the recognition of their military role (ibid. 157).

In a later article, Raaflaub (1997) proposes a model for the integration of the land-owning farmers in the political institutions of Athens. His point of departure is a refutation of the idea that military changes led to political changes. Raaflaub claims that the phalanx tactics was a prerequisite for the development of the hoplite shield. Mass fighting created the need for a shield suited for fighting in massed ranks (Raaflaub 1997a, 50-1). The phalanx preceded the hoplite as such, as a measure of defence for the early poleis against encroaching neighbours due to increasing scarcity of land. Population growth at the end of the Dark Age prompted conflict and made united defence of tenable land necessary (ibid. 52-3). There was no hoplite revolution, but a gradual process determined by the needs of polis society to defend itself. The self-owning farmer who defended his own land and participated in the assembly started his career already in Homeric society (ibid. 53). Early hoplites were highly motivated, fighting on their own property for their own land (ibid. 54). This is the core of Raaflaub's interactive model: The hoplite participated in the assembly and was a citizen of the polis; he defended the territory and ruled the polity. This was compatible with elite aspirations to power, because the stabilising function of broad participation in politics was recognised by the elites (ibid. 55). Warfare in the established polis world was ritualistic and limited to single-day battles, whereas inner instability posed a real threat to the well-being of the community. Therefore, political power was formalised to include the farmers, thus giving stability to the polis (ibid. 57).

There are arguments in favour of the assemblies as the basic organisation of the farming community. That the fierce elite competition was tempered by such associations seems probable. The formation of phalanges to fight off aggressive neighbours might have been the case, but the important point is whether the fighters were allowed political power before or after the fight. It seems like the end of tyranny in Athens gave the opportunity for a broader political participation in general, not only for hoplites.

The organic growth hypothesis of Ehrenberg does not really explain the emergence of the polis. Law was an oral tradition in the 8th century, and was not imposed, nor was it agreed upon at a given time. There was no establishment of a social contract in the 8th century. Rather, the egalitarian political institutions of Greek society may be said to be fundamental for the emergence of a Greek political community as such. The survival of egalitarian institutions may be explained by the failure to establish stable kingships, and a popular reaction against elite rivalry. The city-state preserved democratic structures of power through

its emphasis on common deliberation, and the maintenance of the ideal of a political society which consisted of its citizens.

Raaflaub connects this ideal of citizen-participation to an increased solidarity and political coherence, depending on military participation. His later moderation of this thesis is based on an interactive model, where the citizen is both a political participant and a military champion of his city. As has been argued above, there were several arenas for the inclusion of the inhabitants into the political body. Identification of the citizen with his city was not solely dependent upon military contributions.

5.3.5 Hoplites and Athenian sea-power

Already D. Fustel de Coulanges attributed democracy to the development of the Athenian fleet: After Solon, the poor demanded a place in the political institutions as well, instigating a fourth revolution (Fustel de Coulanges (1879 [1996]) 312-15). The inclusion of the poor into the armed forces, as rowers in the fleet, was the origins of Athenian democracy (ibid. 316).

Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1986) analyses the military organisation at Athens as merging with the social organisation, but with the important limitation that the Athenian went to war as a citizen, not that the citizen governed the city as a warrior. The army and navy of the Greek cities were modelled on the polis. The principle was the citizen-soldier (Vidal-Naquet 1986, 85-6). Apparently, hoplite service was not required of all before the Peloponnesian War. Those liable for service as hoplites were listed in the *lēxiarchikon grammateion*, and were called upon by public announcement on roster-sheets (ibid. 88). After Kleisthenes, the army was organised along the ten tribes. This was the basis for an ideal hoplite republic. The hoplites belong to the three highest classes of the Solonian hierarchy, and supplied their own equipment and gear. They were suited for pitched battles in open terrain, mustered in phalanges (ibid. 89).

This ideal army of hoplites had its ideal battle at Marathon in 490, seventeen years after the reform of Kleisthenes (Vidal-Naquet 1986, 90). But apparently, only a third of the available hoplites were mobilised for the battle, whereas later battles saw the full deployment of Athenian manpower; in the fleet. The innovation of Themistokles is thus a question of mobilising hitherto unused resources (91-2). This evolution in warfare was driven even further in the Peloponnesian War, with its emphasis on naval strategy and the *technē* of manouvring ships. Also, the Athenian army became increasingly diversified, including archers and cavalry, as well as experts recruited from abroad. Fighting was no longer the privilege of the hoplite, but involved the whole city-state, on land and at sea (ibid. 93-4).

Plato's condemnation of naval warfare was because of the *technai* involved (*Laws* 707a-b), and the hoplite continued to be an ideal citizen. Warfare was part of the education even of the philosopher-kings of Plato's Republic (Vidal-Naquet 1986, 96).

Victor D. Hanson (1996) states that the early polis was dominated by a broad landowning class, which was fighting as hoplites, until the mid-fifth century. Their phalanx-tactics reflected the agrarian solidarity of polis membership. The glue of this society was the triple combination of voting citizen, hoplite infantryman and food producer (Hanson 1996, 291). This group represents a "middle" entity within the Greek polis, between the elite and the poor (ibid. 292). The conditions for this society changed, however, in the 5th century. Athenian imperialism made it necessary to grant political influence to social groups that held no land. The thetes served as rowers in the navy, and the long-walls cut off Athens from the rural areas of Attica (ibid. 293). The zeugitai lost political hegemony to the thetes during the 5th and 4th centuries, but nevertheless defended democracy and was granted a central place in Athenian civic ideology (ibid. 307-8).

Josiah Ober (1996) analyses the relationship between hoplites and the politicised demos of Athenian democracy as one of opposition. He points to the fortification of Athens itself and subsequent semi-evacuation of Attica in 431 as a turning-point, away from the hoplite land-forces and towards the sea and the navy. But he does not view the navy as the cause for the development of Athenian democracy. Nevertheless, he states that a hoplite society is oligarchic, not democratic, because citizenship is defined by a property qualification (Ober 1996, 54). Hoplites may have formed 20-40 % of the total population of free male citizens in Greek poleis in the period 700 to 450 BCE, thus forming a fairly large elite. They should perhaps not be termed a "class", because there were great economic differences within the group. The social centrality of the group and its position between the small elite of the very rich and the larger group of the poor make them a kind of "middle class" in Greek polis society (ibid. 59). In Athens, the hoplites formed less of a self-conscious middle class than in other poleis, because of the impact of democratic ideology. Athenian democracy flowered contemporaneously with the rise of the navy, which provided a lower centre of political gravity (ibid. 64). The military strategy of democratic Athens made hoplite warfare irrelevant (ibid. 65).

Paola Ceccarelli (1993) argues that there is little in 5th and 4th century sources to warrant a view of cause and effect between thalassocracy and democracy. The most explicit source, the *Athenaion Politeia* of Ps.-Xenophon, is difficult to date, and it is likewise difficult to assess the circumstances under which it was written (Ceccarelli 1993, 444-5). Ps.-

Xenophon is often said to promote the view that the importance of the navy led to radical democracy. Due to problems in the interpretation of the text itself, it is precarious to base a study on the evolution of democracy on this text only (ibid. 450). The orators of the 4th century, Andokides, Lysias and Isokrates, likewise provide little ground for the maintenance of the thesis.⁹² In none of these authors is there any influence from thalassocracy on the Athenian constitution. Isokrates (VIII 64) views the influence from thalassocracy on the constitution as entirely negative and corruptive, and blames it for the degeneration of the *patrios politeia*, the democratic constitution. The growth of imperial power leads to the downfall of democracy (ibid. 455).

Turning to the 4th century philosophers, Plato shows a distinct hostility to anything concerning naval power and the marine. But he doesn't seem to link it explicitly with Athenian democracy; rather, naval power is a corruptive element which is bad for any constitution (Ceccarelli 1993, 456). Aristotle, in several places in the *Politics*, explicitly discusses the influence of the military on the constitution, but his main political dichotomy is between rich and poor. He advises the employment of a mighty fleet if one seeks hegemonial power, and at the same time denies the necessity for granting citizen rights and political influence to the people (Arist. *Pol.* VII 6, 6-8, 1327a 40 – 1327b 15) (Ceccarelli 1993, 456-8). The dual influence of demographic growth and the increased importance of the navy is further elaborated in his *Athenaion Politeia*, and the role of Perikles is important in this respect (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 23-28). Aristotle is not lost to the presence of multiple factors (Ceccarelli 1993, 459). The few allusions there are in the sources to an intimate relation between democracy and thalassocracy, seem to be ideological constructs, rather than historical accounts (ibid. 470).

Hanson and Ceccarelli argue against the view held by several scholars that the navy promoted radical democracy. Hanson argues that the hoplites defended radical democracy,

⁹² Andokides (III 12) emphasises the relation between peace and democracy, and rates the relation between democracy, the navy, the long walls and the cavalry as secondary. The mention of cavalry excludes the link between democracy and the urban poor (Ceccarelli 1993, 452). Lysias (XIII 15-16) views the fleet as a necessity for democratic Athens to defend herself against Spartan dictate (Ceccarelli 1993, 452). The 4th century historians likewise seldom propose a direct relation between thalassocracy and democracy. Xenophon has no causal relation between the two, neither does he assert a negative influence of Athenian sea-power on the constitution (Ceccarelli 1993, 460-2). Thus, neither Xenophon nor the orators of the 4th century suppose a connection between thalassocracy and democracy (ibid. 463). 5th century sources are likewise silent on this theory. Herodotos mentions thalassocracies, but there are no political similarities between the different powers (Hdt.III.122) (Ceccarelli 1993, 464). Aristophanes does not blame the fleet for democratisation or for causing decadence in Athenian politics. Thukydides emphasises the building of the long walls in 431 as a fundamental trait in the thalassocracy of Athens (Thuc. I.143) (Ceccarelli 1993, 466). But this doesn't necessarily mean that he viewed the political development of Athens as dependent upon the military situation. On the contrary, most

thus making a political conflict with or opposition to the thetes unlikely. Ceccarelli argues that the accounts of a connection between democracy and thalassocracy seem to be written to slander either democracy or thalassocracy, whereas a causal relation between the two is unattested in the ancient sources. Ober emphasises other factors promoting democracy than the Athenian navy; his main explanation for democracy is the uprising of the demos against the Spartans and Isagoras in the “Athenian Revolution” of 508/7.

The increased importance of the navy in Athens is at any rate a late phenomenon in comparison to the several long-term changes in Athenian politics which promoted democracy. The attribution of radical democracy to the navy alone is an insufficient explanation of the emergence of democracy. The other factors involved in the promotion of democracy must be taken into account, and it seems to be little ground for describing naval developments as a “final step”, in view of the fairly minor changes in political thinking this change brought about.

5.4 Conclusion

The hoplites were no ready defined social or political group; they were an economic class capable of serving as heavy-armed infantry with their own equipment in 6th century Greece. Their equipment had undergone a long development traceable in both literature and archaeology. Phalanx tactics can be treated separately from the hoplites, and is known from Homer, as well as from Near Eastern societies in the Bronze Age (Sumer) and the Iron Age (Assyria). It seems clear that the phalanx is not a product of a military reform, but a tactic adopted in step with technical innovations and the availability of suitably equipped fighters. There must at any rate have been a considerable presence of poor and poorly armed peasants in any defensive battle of a territory or settlement, even though these are not recorded from pitched battles.

Concerning *to meson* and the polis as a circle of warriors, the evidence is in favour of a concept of equality among the Homeric fighters, and later among the citizens. However, this is not necessarily restricted to be a circle of *warriors*, but seem to have pervaded every form of official assembly of the members of a community. In the Sumerian epic *Bilgameš and Akka*, there are two assemblies, called *ukkin* (lit. “circle of people”), one of the elders and one of the *guruš*, i.e. the able-bodied young men. There were thus both a council of elders and an assembly of the young. The young were public workers and warriors. Similar to the *Iliad*, the

thalassocracies have been undemocratic, so that a direct link between military strategy and political regime seems untenable (ibid. 467).

Sumerian epic deals with a conflict situation. Therefore, the decisions taken by the assembly involves warfare and tactics. But the basic structure of an assembly in the city-state is not tied to its warring functions. This is evident from the assemblies of the Levantine city-states from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age, which are described in the Amarna letters and in the Old Testament. A circle of people consisted of those who belonged to the community, whether they were merchants or warriors.

The specific martial nature of the Greek poleis after the fall of the kings is an historical generalisation stemming from Aristotle. It makes little sense to tie the importance of assemblies to the development in military tactics in the 7th and 6th centuries. Assemblies played an important part in the government of rural communities, as well as in early urban societies. Both Sumerian and Greek city-states thought of the political as a matter taking place in the middle of a circle of people.

Phalanx tactics are attested from both Sumer and Greece. The introduction of hoplite tactics was no unique historical event restricted to Greece. The emphasis on the hoplites as a prerequisite for active citizen participation in politics does not explain the formation of the polis. Peasant assemblies were organised in the same way, centred on *to meson* and lie at the root of early urban constitutions. The remarkable event in Athens is still the prominent place such assemblies attained in the constitution after 462/1. This was not because of the hoplites, but because of the insistence of the whole demos on participation in making decisions.

6 Solon, Peisistratos and the tyrant slayers

“Hipparchos was boyish, passionate and fond of art, music and literature (and it was he who had sent for Anakreon, Simonides and their circle, and the other poets).”

Aristotle, *Ath.pol.* XVIII.1

“A great light appeared at that time for those dwelling in Athens when Aristogeiton and Harmodios killed Hipparchos”.

Simonides (I Page)

“With their souls armed with this [the Solonian] constitution, Harmodios and Aristogeiton tried to cast down the reign of the Peisistratids”.

Diodoros of Sicily, *Bibliotheke* IX 1.4

6.1 Introduction

In 514/3 a murder is committed in Athens. During the Panathenaean Festival two young men stab and kill Hipparchos, Peisistratid and brother of the tyrant Hippias. The bodyguards kill one of the perpetrators, Harmodios, on the spot, whereas the other one, Aristogeiton, is caught alive, subjected to torture and subsequently executed by Hippias. After this, the tyranny was much harder for the Athenians. Later events would set this attempt on the tyrant’s life in a wider perspective: In 511/0 the tyrant Hippias was driven out by the Alkmaionids and Spartans, and Athens got a new democratic constitution through the Reforms of Kleisthenes. After this, its own citizens ruled Athens. The victory over the Persians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 was also a final victory over the Peisistratids, who returned with the Persians, hoping to get their old power back. Democracy triumphed over its inner enemies as well as the world’s greatest war machine.

These events made the Athenians look back at the salvation of democracy, attributed to the Reforms of Solon, as the result of an armed uprising against oppressive tyrants. The two tyrant slayers were honoured with official statues, and the Persian King Xerxes took one, made by Antenor, to Susa as loot after the sack of Athens in 479. Descendants of the Tyrant Slayers enjoyed the right to free meals at the Prytaneion. One could not name one’s slave Harmodios nor Aristogeiton.

6.2 The rise of the tyrants

6.2.1 The reforms of Solon

But why was Hipparchos actually killed, how did it happen, and what consequences did it have? To answer this, it is necessary to take a closer look at the reforms of Solon and the Peisistratids' road to power. The *Athēnaiōn Politeia*, attributed to Aristotle, is the best source to the life and works of Solon, Athens' famous reformer. In his time, there had been strife and civil war amongst the aristocrats (*hoi gnōrimoi*), and between the rich (*hoi plousioi*) and the poor (*hoi penētes*) of Attica. There was discontent because the land only belonged to a few, whereas the peasants had to pay rent (*misthōsis*) to till the earth. In addition, one could lose one's freedom and be sold as a slave if one was unable to handle one's debt (*Ath.pol.* 2.1-3). The warring factions chose Solon, a man of noble descent and middle wealth, as arbiter in 594/3 (*ibid.* 5.2-3). He wrote new laws and established political institutions to secure more than just the aristocrats a say in politics. Also, he abolished debt-bondage and cancelled debt (*seisachtheia*) (*ibid.* 6.1). He divided the citizens into four new property-classes (*telē*), the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, the *hippeis*, the *zeugitai*, and the *thētes*, as criteria for eligibility to offices (*archai*), but kept the old organisation of the citizens in four *phylai*. The poorest class, the thetes, only had the right to attend assemblies and jury courts, but thus participated in politics through their votes (*ibid.* 7.3). The nine archons were the most powerful officials, chosen from election lists from each of the *phylai* (*klerōtas ek prokritōn*) (*ibid.* 8.1). The Council of Four Hundred consisted of candidates chosen by lot from a list of citizens elected in advance, each phyle having a hundred representatives (*ibid.* 8.4). This system of property as the criterion for political participation abolished the ancient aristocracy of blood. Solon also made a law which said that he who didn't take to arms and participate on either side in civil strife was to be without citizen rights (*atimia*) (*ibid.* 8.5). The three most important democratic changes were the abolishment of debt-slavery, the right of all to prosecute anyone in court, and the right to appeal to a jury court, something that gave power to the people in particular (*ibid.* 9.1).

Solon is said by many to have been assisted by the Cretan Epimenides of Phaestos (*Plat. Leg.* 642d; *Arist. Ath.pol.* 1; *Plut. Sol.* 11). He is a mysterious figure, said to have been sleeping in a cave for 57 years. He had a reputation for being most loved by the gods, and was sent for to expiate a curse in Athens in 594/3. He lived to be a 157 years old (*Diog. Laert.* I, 109-111; *FGrH* 457, T1). The *Suda* corroborates this information: He was reputed to have been able to let the soul leave his body and return to it, and was a writer of oracles (*Suda* s.v.

Epimenides; *FGrH* 457, T2).⁹³ In Plutarchos, he is a half-legendary character held to be a “new kurete” (*kourēs veos*) and a son of the nymph Blasta. He came to Athens to expiate the curse of Kylon,⁹⁴ befriended Solon and assisted him in his legislation. Epimenides made the Athenians restrict cultic worship, encouraged simple sacrifices at funerals and told the Athenian women to refrain from excessive lamentation at funeral processions (Plut. *Sol.* 11). Solon was famous for placing restrictions on luxuries, the conduct of women and lavish display, especially at funerals: There was to be no lacerations of cheeks or wailing of dirges, and no sacrifices of oxen or more than three pieces of clothing. It was forbidden to visit the tombs of others (Plut. *Sol.* 21).

Most people were in one way or the other displeased by the reforms, either because they were too lenient or because they went too far. But instead of changing the laws, Solon went away for ten years, to Egypt and Lydia, in order to let the laws mature among the Athenians (Hdt. 1.29-30). In the ensuing time, internal strife spread once more, and the factions gathered round the old aristocratic families (*Ath.pol.* 11.1-2). Among these nobles, Peisistratos in particular came to the fore. He rallied those who saw themselves impoverished by the cancellation of debt (*ibid.* 13.3-5).

6.2.2 The rule of Peisistratos

Herodotos, Thukydides and Aristotle write about the history of the Peisistratids, but Aristotle is the most comprehensive. He tells that the tyrant rule was established gradually. Peisistratos had a reputation for being a friend of the people, and had won fame in the war against Megara. He got himself a bodyguard of club-bearers (*korynēphoroi*), to protect him, as he said, against the other nobles of Attica (*Ath.pol.* 14.1). Solon supposedly was against it (*ibid.* 14.2), and that proved foresighted, because in 561/0 Peisistratos and his party took the Acropolis (Hdt. 1.59). Peisistratos was a friend of the people and moderate in his rule, but

⁹³ He belongs to the group of prophets and wonderworkers whose heyday were the 7th and 6th centuries (Jacoby 1955a, 308). His role as expiator is connected to his Cretan origin; Crete was the classic country of cathartic magic (*ibid.* 309).

⁹⁴ Epimenides the Cretan cleansed the polis. The culprits of the Kylon sacrilege were banished; those of them who were dead were disinterred and their bones cast away (*Ath.pol.* 1). In Plato's *Laws*, Klinias says that Epimenides was divinely inspired. He was born on Crete. Inspired by the oracle, he went to Athens and performed sacrifices. He foresaw the defeat of the Persians (*Leg.* 642 d). Kylon was an Olympic victor who aspired to tyranny at Athens. With a clique of companions, he attempted to seize the Acropolis. When this failed, he sought refuge by the statue of Athena. He and his friends were promised asylum if they would leave the sanctuary, but were slain (Hdt. 5.71). Thukydides offers more information, saying that Kylon married a daughter of Theagenes, tyrant of Megara. The oracle urged Kylon to seize the Acropolis on the most important festival to Zeus, and he procured troops from Megara. He got the day wrong, however, and the plot failed. Under siege from the entire population of the countryside, the insurgents were left to starve and thirst on the Acropolis. They were promised quarter, but afterwards slain although they had sought refuge at altars. Their slayers were known

didn't stay in power for long. Athens was divided by factional strife between those living on the coast, led by the Alkmaionid Megakles, the supporters of oligarchy from the inland led by Lykourgos, and the democratically minded faction from Diakria, led by Peisistratos.

Lykourgos and Megakles teamed up to oust Peisistratos, who went into exile (Hdt. 1.60; *Ath.pol.* 14.3).

Shortly thereafter, Megakles offered Peisistratos his daughter's hand, and arranged his homecoming in a strange way. With the help of a particularly tall and beautiful woman by the name Phye dressed up as Athena herself, he paraded Peisistratos into town on a chariot steered by "Athena" while he made it known that Athena brought Peisistratos back to Athens. In this way he came to power again (Hdt. 1.60; *Ath.pol.* 14.4). But the agreement with Megakles soured when he refused to consummate the marriage with his daughter. Fearing the other two factions, Peisistratos fled the city and gathered new allies, money and fighters in exile (Hdt. 1.61). Then, in 546/5, he returned with support from the Thebans, Lygdamis of Naxos and a cavalry from Eretria, was victorious at the Battle of Pallene, and came to power in Athens again (Hdt. 1.62-4). This time he disarmed the citizens and established the tyranny (*Ath.pol.* 15.1-5).

Peisistratos is supposed to have been a mild ruler, and didn't put the Solonian constitution out of use (Hdt. 1.59). He encouraged ordinary people to mind their own business while he took care of affairs of state. By treating the excellent citizens kindly, he got their support, and likewise by helping the ordinary people. In addition, he subjected himself to the same laws as everybody else. By lending out money he supported the peasants in the countryside, and he established courts out in the demes. This was meant to keep people from rural Attica out of the city itself and otherwise see to it that they did not want to nor had the spare time for interfering in politics (*Ath.pol.* 16.1-5). He introduced a tax of a twentieth (Thuc. 6.54) or a tenth part of the crops (*Ath.pol.* 16.4.). Aristotle places him together with Kypselos of Corinth and others as a tyrant who came to power from the position of demagogue (*Pol.* V x.1310b16). His time in power was remembered as a golden age (*hōs ho epi Kronou bios*) (*Ath.pol.* 16.7), but when he died in 528/7 he had been tyrant for 33 years, of which only 19 in power, 14 of them being spent in exile (ibid. 17.1).

as the Polluted, as were their descendants, and they were banished, but returned to Athens later (Thuc. 1.126). Among the polluted were the Alkmaeonids.

6.2.3 Harmodios and Aristogeiton

Aristotle says in the *Politics*, that he who inherits a rule has more trouble getting respect than he who has established one himself. Further, he says that tyrants may be brought down either because of hatred or loathing, and loathing in particular grows against a soft and luxurious way of life. Wrath may also bring down a tyranny, but is less effective than hatred, because hate works over a long time and under consideration, whereas wrath suddenly bursts out and leads to unprecedented actions. In addition, Aristotle recommends bringing along a stronger, foreign power (*Pol. V* x 1311a22-1313a10).

The next generation of tyrants were worse rulers. It seems to be a tendency for heirs to monarchic power to abuse it, or in other ways alienate themselves from their subjects. The sons of Kypselus, tyrant of Corinth, who squandered their heritage and committed abominable acts including murder and necrophilia, are another example to confirm this rule (Hdt. 3.48-50; 5.92).

Concerning the slaying of tyrants, information from Thukydides informs us that most people in Athens believed Hipparchos was the tyrant. Thukydides argues that this is because of his dramatic death, since it was actually Hippias, as the oldest, who inherited the rule from his father (Thuc. 6.54-55). Aristotle corroborates this information by describing Hippias as the one most fit to rule, whereas Hipparchos was a playboy and a literate (*Ath.pol.* 18.1). Aristotle mentions two additional sons, Thessalos (Hegesistratos) and Iophon, born of an Argive woman (ibid. 17.3). Hipparchos later had the reputation for having introduced performances of epic poetry at the Panathenaean Festival and brought the Homeric text to Athens. In addition he distributed herms inscribed with gnomic sentences throughout Athens (cf. Ps.-Plato: *Hipparchus*).

Initially, the rule of Hippias was moderate. The tyrants adorned the city with new buildings, waged the wars and sacrificed in the temples. The tyrants always had one of their own among the archons, but respected the Solonian constitution (Thuc. 6.54). But eventually something happened to incur the loathing and hatred of at least some citizens: Thukydides says it was Hipparchos (ibid.6.54), whereas Aristotle places the blame on Thessalos (*Ath.pol.*18.2), but at any rate one of the Peisistratids wooed for Harmodios. Harmodios was the lover of Aristogeiton, a man of the middle class without much influence (Thuc. 6.54). They were both of Gephyraian descent, says Herodotos, and descendants of those Phoenicians who came with Kadmos and first brought the alphabet to Greece. In Athens, the Gephyraioi had obtained almost full citizen rights after they were driven from Boiotia (Hdt. 5.55-8).

Aristogeiton was afraid the mighty Hipparchos might have his way by force, and thus pondered how he could bring about an end to tyranny. In the mean time, Hipparchos sought to humiliate Harmodios, by inviting his sister to carry a basket in a procession, and thereafter refuse her as unworthy (Thuc. 6.54; 6.56). In addition to that, according to Aristotle, Thessalos referred to Harmodios as an unmanly fellow (*Ath.pol.* 18.2).

Harmodios and Aristogeiton considered this reasons enough to launch a conspiracy against Hippias, and they plotted to kill him during the Panathenaean Festival of 514/3. According to Thukydides, a procession was performed there involving citizens carrying shields and lances, and it would thus be easy to be armed without arousing suspicion (Thuc. 6.56). Aristotle claims that this custom is a later invention (*Ath.pol.*18.4), but the conspirators were at any rate armed with daggers. They were hoping that the others citizens would join in as soon as anyone struck the first blow against the tyrants, as they were all armed because of the procession (Thuc. 6.56). According to Thukydides, the conspirators were few from fear of getting caught (Thuc. 6.56), but according to Aristotle, they were numerous (*Ath.pol.*18.2). Neither are they of one mind concerning where Hippias actually was. Thukydides says he was out by Kerameikos, the cemetery outside of Athens (Thuc. 6.57), whereas Aristotle claims he was on the Acropolis (*Ath.pol.* 18.3).

As Harmodios and Aristogeiton got ready for action, they saw one of their fellow conspirators in conversation with Hippias, who was always available to the citizens and often spoke with them. Fearing they were now betrayed, they bolted in towards (or down to) the Leokoreion by the Agora, and stumbled upon Hipparchos there. One out of jealousy, the other out of wounded pride, drew his dagger and slew him immediately. Whereas the bodyguard killed Harmodios straight away, Aristogeiton was tortured and interrogated (Thuc. 6.57; *Ath.pol.* 18.3-4). Under interrogation, he yielded the names of many friends of the tyrants as fellow conspirators, some say to weaken the tyranny, others say that there really was widespread resistance to the tyrants in the city. Lastly, he bade Hippias give him his hand so he could promise to betray even more conspirators, but afterwards mocked him for having shaken the hand of his brother's murderer. Hippias was enraged, and killed the last of the Tyrant Slayers (*Ath.pol.* 18.4-6). Thus, the ploy had failed, and the tyrants were still in power.

There was a drinking song probably originating in the late 6th century celebrating Harmodios and Aristogeiton, which is preserved by Athenaios (15.50, 695ab). The song is also alluded to in the *Acharnians* (980) of Aristophanes, which is explained in a scholion (Robinson 2004, 93-5). The symposiasts identified themselves with Harmodios and Aristogeiton, singing that they would carry their swords in a branch of myrtle, like the two did

when they made Athens a place of *isonomia*, by killing the tyrant Hipparchos. Harmodios and Aristogeiton are hailed as blessed heroes, living forever (Athenaios 15.50, 695ab).

6.2.4 An end to tyranny

But after this, the tyrant's rule became harsher, and many citizens were exiled or executed. Particularly many of the Alkmaionids were sent away. Hippias started to look about for a place of refuge in case of an uprising against him. He gave his daughter Archedike to the tyrant Aiantides of Lampsakos, because he hoped to get in touch with the Persian king Dareios through his contacts (Thuc. 6.59). In addition, he started to fortify Munichia (*Ath.pol.* 19.2). But in 511/0, he and his people were ousted by the Alkmaionids and Spartans, and fled via Lampsakos to king Dareios. There, the last tyrant of Athens plotted revenge for twenty years, until the Battle at Marathon (Thuc. 6.59).

It was thus not Harmodios and Aristogeiton who ended the time of the tyrants in Athens, but Sparta and the exiled Alkmaionids. The Alkmaionids in exile had tried many times in vain to tear the Peisistratids down from power. They had a fortress, Leipsydriion, in Paionia in Attica, and launched attacks from there (Hdt. 5.62; *Ath.pol.* 19.3). The exiles were routed, however, and decided to join in league with the Amphictyonians. Thus, they secured a contract to build a new temple at Delphi (Hdt. 5.62). In this way they obtained influence over the oracle, which thereafter repeatedly urged the Spartans to break the power of the tyrants in Athens. Even though the kings of Sparta were guest friends of the Peisistratids, they were angry for their close friendship with the city of Argos (Hdt. 5.63; *Ath.pol.* 19.4). King Kleomenes finally succeeded in laying siege to the Peisistratids with a land force by the Pelargic Wall on the Acropolis (Hdt. 5.64; *Ath.pol.* 19.5). It might have taken longer time to force the tyrant and his family into submission, had it not been for their children being taken hostage as they were attempted smuggled out of the siege. The Peisistratids were given free leave within five days, and the time of tyranny was over, after 36 years all in all (Hdt. 5.65; *Ath.pol.* 19.6).

6.3 Interpretations

The Solonian reforms, the Peisistratids and the end of the tyranny has received a lot of scholarly attention. Most follow Thukydides in giving little credence to the story of Harmodios and Aristogeiton as the instigators of democracy at Athens. The place attributed to Solon's reforms in Athenian constitutional history, however, varies.

Fustel de Coulanges (1879) divided Athenian political and social developments into a series of revolutions. His second revolution of Athens is marked by the uprising of the peasants against the Eupatrids, ending a period of oppressive aristocratic domination of the landless peasants (Fustel de Coulanges, 1879 [1996], 259-63). One of the Eupatrids, Kylon, attempted to exploit the situation by becoming a tyrant ca. 612, but failed. Civil war followed, and lasted until an arbiter was found in Solon, who abolished debt-bondage (ibid. 274-5). The emancipation of the peasants from bondmanship was followed by their inclusion in the constitution as citizens. This event is designated a third revolution, and consisted in the peasants demanding political rights to defend their new freedom (ibid. 275).

The new constitution of Solon was based on wealth rather than birth, putting an end to Eupatrid dominance. But the poor hated the new regime as much as the older one, and opted for a tyrant to rule them. The tyrant Peisistratos and his sons were evicted from Athens twice by the other wealthy families of Athens, but returned both times and met little resistance from the Athenian masses. It took a Spartan intervention to finally remove the Peisistratids from power (Fustel de Coulanges, 1879 [1996], 276).

In Fustel de Coulanges interpretation, the driving force in Athenian history were the peasants, who instigated revolutions and unrest, and thus paved the way for tyrants who sought power in the city. Kylon and Peisistratos took advantage of situations of civil war or unrest, and turned against the other aristocrats. De Coulanges argues that the Athenian masses wanted a tyrant to rule them. The end of tyranny is attributed to the intervention of foreign forces, brought in by exiled aristocratic families. This emphasis on the masses as a force in history is in opposition to the interpretations of Jacoby and Ehrenberg, who present the period of tyranny and reforms as one of party strife within the elite:

Felix Jacoby (1949) has treated the fragments of the *Atthidographers*, i.e. the local historians of Athens, and their divergence or agreement with Herodotos, Thukydides and later historians. In analysing the sources of the tradition of the Peisistratids, he found that all authors follow Herodotos in narrating the tyranny. There is a divergence of judgement, however: To whom belongs the merit of liberating Athens? (Jacoby 1949, 153).⁹⁵ Herodotos probably used an Alkmaionid source, emphasising the importance of the worsening of Peisistratid rule, and diminishing the importance of the tyrant slayers (ibid. 155-6). Aristotle has additional information which is not found in Herodotos, and must have had additional

⁹⁵ According to Hellanikos, an historian whose work is referred to by Thukydides, the creator of the Athenian constitution was Kleisthenes. After the defeat of Athens on Sicily in 413, there is an increased conservative

Atthidographers as sources (ibid. 156).⁹⁶ Thukydides and Herodotos agree, but there must have been one more source now lost, which differed. According to Jacoby, this source was surely Hellanikos. Thukydides refutes the view of events presented in this source (ibid. 158-9).

The conception rejected by Thukydides, that Athens was liberated by the tyrant slayers, was probably the “official” one. Jacoby is certain that the glorification of the Tyrannicides was a measure against Perikles, taken by the aristocrats who also sang the drinking song celebrating Harmodios (ibid. 160). He does not believe that the tradition of the Tyrannicides was propagated by the Alkmaionids to diminish the role played by Sparta. Kleisthenes later fell from grace when he looked for Persian help against Sparta (ibid. 339, n. 53). Jacoby sees an opposition between the Alkmaionids and the rest of the nobility, evident after the Kylon-affair, but also in the adoption of the demos as drinking fellows (*hetairoi*) by Kleisthenes. The opposition insisted that the aristocrats of the family of the Gephyraioi liberated Athens. The Alkmaionids at any rate had made their peace with Hippias, evident from the archons’ list mentioning Alkmaionids as archons under the tyrant. The anti-Alkmaionid opposition gained the upper hand after Marathon in 490. Therefore, Kleisthenes sought the support of the Persians (ibid. 160).

Two notions contradicting each other existed in 5th century Athens: The first is the claim of the Alkmaeonids that they had liberated Athens, by winning over Delphi and securing the help of Sparta. The second is the notion that Athens had been liberated by Harmodios and Aristogeiton. This was the official one, and had its origin in the circles of the nobility hostile to the Alkmaeonids, after the overthrow of Kleisthenes (Jacoby 1949, 162). The disagreement on this permeates the whole tradition (ibid. 164).

These indications of party struggle within the elite are interesting, but tantalising, since the sources giving the other versions of the events are irrevocably lost. It is difficult to determine whether the song of Harmodios and Aristogeiton was in opposition to Perikles. The fragments of the archon’s list at any rate demonstrate how firmly the Alkmaionids belonged to the elite in Athens; they were no outsiders above private interests, but a powerful group entering alliances with their enemies while fighting for their own position in the city. But it is

interest in the *patrios politeia*, i.e. the Solonian constitution. From the fourth century, the Atthides treat Solon fully (Jacoby 1949, 154).

⁹⁶ An example is the detail of the fortification of Munichia in the fourth year after the murder of Hipparchos, and about the rebuilding of the Delphic temple. The Atthides in question may have been the ones of Philochoros or Androtion (Jacoby 1949, 156).

not evident that it was Kleisthenes who sought the support of the Persians. According to Herodotos, this was done in his absence, before he returned from exile (cf. Hdt. 5.73).

Victor Ehrenberg (1965) also discusses the strange double story of the liberation of the Athenians from tyranny. The Alkmaionids claimed to be the liberators, and this is analysed as a continuation of the noble slogan of *isonomia* in opposition to tyranny (Ehrenberg 1965, 280). The legend of the Tyrannicides was established while the Alkmaionids and other nobles were still allies in their struggle against the tyrants. The exiled nobles were united as allies at Leipsydriion. The Athenians, according to Ehrenberg, wanted a story of liberation involving Athenians; not exiled nobles and Spartans. Therefore, a liberation story where the Athenian demos played a crucial role became widespread (ibid. 281). The aristocrats may have accepted a version which played down their own role to please the people. Kleisthenes, however, appropriated Harmodios and Aristogeiton as symbols for his own democratic policy, because he had fallen out with the rest of the nobility.⁹⁷ According to Ehrenberg, it was thus the Alkmaionid Kleisthenes who made the liberation from the tyrants the prelude to democracy (ibid. 282).

Ehrenberg analyses the drinking-song to Harmodios as an Athenian national anthem (Ehrenberg 1965, 263). The song probably originated in a circle of young aristocrats, to which Harmodios himself belonged (ibid. 256). Later, there was a law forbidding parody of the song, which is alluded to in Hypereides (ibid. 255). The point of the song is that the symposiasts sang that they were ever at the ready to carry arms for the sake of democracy and the freedom of Athens (ibid. 261).

The situation surrounding the fall of the tyrants and the popular version involving Athenian heroes need not have such a complicated explanation as those attempted by Ehrenberg and Jacoby. Popular memory, as pointed out by Thukydides, attaches itself to dramatic events (Thuc. 6.54-5). Simplification of history into heroic revolutions and single heroes is a commonplace in political mythology. Of course, this is in itself a reduction of the whole question into a generalisation, but it seems like one will never really get an answer to how or why the different stories concerning the end of tyranny came into existence.

James F. McGlew (1993) sees the revolt in Athens and eviction of the Tyrants in 511/0 as a result of the complicity between the demos and the tyrants. Having established a ruler whose power was absolute, the people would as a next step want this power for itself (McGlew 1993, 5-9). A people of tyrants overthrew the tyranny of one man, with his

⁹⁷ When, how or why this happened, Ehrenberg does not say.

unfettered power to rule (ibid. 188-90). The reforms of Solon had failed to prevent the emergence of a tyrant even though he posited the laws as the highest ruler. Solon's vision was to place the laws in his own stead, and he never intended to make the demos sovereign (ibid. 107-112). The reforms contained no steps to actually prevent tyrants from attaining the highest position in the state. Neither did they do away with the reasons for civil strife in the first place, leaving the rich with their property intact. The only way to freedom was for the people itself to take the position as the source of justice and deliberation, by becoming tyrants themselves (ibid. 119-20).

McGlew places the responsibility for the emergence of tyranny with Solon: His reforms were insufficient to secure freedom and prosperity for the people. Therefore, they revolted against the elite. This interpretation, however, seems to place too much emphasis on Solon and overestimate the scope of his reforms. There were other forces at work in Athens at the time, including those involved in the struggle for power within the elite, which Solon could not affect. Without being able to redistribute land, he could not really alleviate poverty, either.

Christian Meier (1980) argues that the bonds between aristocratic patrons and their clients were organised and tightened within the cultic subdivisions of Athenian society; the phyle and the phratia. The protests and uprisings prompting the reforms of Solon do not seem to have severed these client bonds, but to have tempered their consequences through legal restrictions on debt-bondage (ibid. 101-2). The rules of aristocratic rivalry were still in function after the Tyranny of the Peisistratids, and Kleisthenes first sought the support of the demos against the other aristocratic families when his own faction was in the loss (ibid. 103).

Meier's analysis points forward to the reforms in 508/7, and seems to place Solon as a prelude to Kleisthenes. Solon may have had other intentions with his reforms than to emancipate the citizens; to alleviate debt-bondage, and perhaps thereby to secure an independent group of self-owning farmers to protect the city against enemies, perhaps Megara.

Mogens Herman Hansen (1993) has a more practical view of these events: Solon's division of citizens into property-classes was prompted by the hoplite-reform. The hoplite fighters were mainly recruited by the class of *zeugitai*, the Athenian landowning farmers, who through their military power demanded political power. The tyrants were frequently hoplite generals who fought off their aristocratic rivals with the support of the peasants (Hansen 1993, 116).

The Solonian reforms do not seem to have been brought about by a demand for political rights, but rather to have been prompted by the negative consequences of debt-bondage and civil strife. The correlation between hoplites and political rights is not a necessary one; the hoplites did not appear suddenly as a group with a political program or a list of demands.

Bjørn Qviller analyses the Solonian laws against luxuries (cf. Plut. Solon 12, 21) as an anti-sympotic measure to control the Athenian aristocrats. The peasants were impoverished by aristocratic greed (cf. Solon 4a, b, c; 5), because the aristocrats devoted themselves to competitive generosity and feasting (Qviller [unpublished], 27). Such activities were checked by laws on funerals (ibid. 28). Solon did not redistribute land, and Peisistratos could thus raise a faction against the rich (cf. Arist. Pol 1305a18sq) (ibid. 31).

A tyranny, however, has this in common with oligarchy that it pursues wealth, as it provides the means to keep up a bodyguard and a luxurious way of living (cf. Arist. Pol. 1311a8sq). Such wealth would also be necessary to keep up the chiefly redistribution necessary to remain popular with the demos (Qviller [unpublished], 42). Peisistratos and the other tyrants made the public festivals more splendid than in earlier times, especially the Panathenaic Festival. This represented a growth in expenditure for the public benefit (ibid. 46-7). These festivals, however, were used to strengthen the institutions of the polis and assert its independence (ibid. 48). The Peisistratids initiated huge and expensive building projects, noted by Aristotle as an excellent way to keep potential plotters poor and busy elsewhere (Arist. Pol. 1313b16 ff.). The Olympeion of the Peisistratids was part of their chiefly redistribution to increase the glory of the polis, and such activities were intensified after the death of Peisistratos (Qviller [unpublished], 50-5). There was probably a desire to compete with other tyrants: The temple to Zeus Olympios was a giant project. In addition, Hippias built the stronghold Munichia, which led to increased expenditure during the later years of tyranny (ibid. 56). Peisistratos gathered riches in exile, partly from mines by the river Strymon in Thrace, at Mount Pangaeus (cf. Hdt.1.64; *Ath.pol.* 15). He also gathered a tax of a twentieth of the income of the Athenians (cf. Thuc.6 .54; a tenth in *Ath.pol.* 16) (Qviller [unpublished], 64). Overtaxation led to loss of power for the tyrants (ibid. 96). The mines of Mount Pangaeus were probably taken by the Persians in 513 (cf. Hdt. 5.1), and this may have resulted in an economic loss to the tyrants (Qviller [unpublished], 99). The tyranny had growing expenses in a period of dwindling income. Hippias sold projecting upper stories and parts of buildings to raise money, as well as involving himself in currency fraud to make ends

meet (cf. Arist. *Oecon.* 1347a; Qviller [unpublished], 99-100). The tyrants' success as builders and instigators of festivities meant economic pressure on the citizens (ibid. 105).

The Peisistratids rose to fame in the Athenian war with Megara (cf. *Ath.pol.* 14; Qviller [unpublished], 26). Conflict with Megara was sapping the strength of the Athenians, especially the bitter strife over Salamis. Solon was famous among the Athenians for his dedication to the war against Megara (Plut. *Sol.* 8-10). Perhaps the emancipation of the bondmen was a measure to enlist more fighters against Megara over Salamis? Athens would have been in need of more manpower to resolve the conflict in their favour.

Reactions against the tyrants' lavish spending could explain the violent reactions against the tyrants near the end of their reign. Most popular leaders in Athens, however, rose to prominence, or remained in power, because of building projects and public spectacle, provided they were able to get funds from elsewhere than the pockets of the citizens. The increase in taxes perhaps contributed to resentment against the tyrants. The problem of economic inequality in Athens was later solved through the introduction of the liturgic system.

Jochen Bleicken (1995) emphasises the role of Kleisthenes over Solon and the tyrant slayers in changing Athenian society towards a democracy. The aristocratic world of the 7th century suffered a crisis, resulting in civil strife (Bleicken 1995, 22-4). The institutionalisation of judges followed in the wake of these troubled times. In Athens, Drakon committed the reformed criminal laws to writing in 624. Solon was elected archon in 594 to attempt reconciliation in the conflict between the elite and impoverished peasants of Attica. His moves were the *seisachtheia*, or relief from burdens, and the introduction of a timocracy based on property-classes replacing the kinship-based aristocracy (ibid. 24-5). The active citizens were those able to contribute to the aggressive foreign policy of the state as hoplites (ibid. 27). The aim of Solon was *eunomia*, not democratic reforms. But his reforms were a step towards broadening the basis for political participation, by awaking a political awareness in larger groups of the populace (ibid. 29-30).

In the civil strife which followed the reforms of Solon, aristocrats might have seen opportunities for power in an alliance with the groups of the *demos* outside the hoplite classes (Bleicken 1995, 31). The Peisistratids rose to power as a tyranny friendly to the *demos*. Popular measures were taken, like the introduction of religious festivals, but the tyrants also laid a tax burden on those who owned land. The festival policy of the Peisistratids was rather a glorification of Athens and their own rule than the expression of a democratic sentiment (ibid. 35-6). The Peisistratids based their power on the Solonian reforms, but placed

themselves in the stead of a politicised demos. Their policy, however, contributed to the consolidation of Attica into a political whole, weakening the local influence of the other aristocrats. Their suspension of the political participation of the other aristocrats was a prerequisite for further developments. Its own success was the reason for the end of the tyranny itself (ibid. 38-40). Soon, the story circulated that the ground for democracy was prepared by the tyrant slayers; Harmodios and Aristogeiton (ibid. 46). But this was a mere popular tale, and the change to democracy had not been possible without the reforms of Kleisthenes.

The Solonian reforms and the policy of the tyrants promoted the political emancipation of the hoplites and the rest of the demos; this might seem to be a prelude to the Kleisthenian reforms. The peasants are interpreted as slowly encroaching on the political field, as though they were invisible as citizens and inhabitants before they were granted political rights. They peasants were politically present in local assemblies, and they did show political initiative, like when they rose against Kylon or when they promoted the tyranny of Peisistratos.

6.4 Discussion

The example of Solon and Epimenides is a reminder that ancient political reforms must be treated in connection with other cultural factors, such as religion and superstition. Solon needed the assistance of a specialist of cathartic magic before he could initiate any reform of the Athenian constitution. The Alkmaionids were haunted by the Kylon-affair throughout Athenian history; their enemies tried to derail the political careers of both Perikles and Alkibiades with reference to this ancient affair.

Concerning the tyrants, it seems like the rule of the Peisistratids had two contradictory effects: On the one hand, it weakened the influence of the other aristocrats, making popular rule a future possibility, but on the other hand, it followed a policy of excluding the rural citizens from the political affairs of the city through the introduction of rural courts. It seems like the strategy of Peisistratos was to break down the beginning political consolidation of Attica that resulted from the Solonian reforms. This fits the view that the goal of the tyrants was to replace a politicised demos with themselves. A bit surprising is the slight resistance to the establishment of tyranny. But it is important to have in mind that the Peisistratids based their power on their local adherents from Diakria, and entered alliances with other aristocrats who also had their local adherents throughout Attica. The demos was still in a state of

fragmentation, and knew loyalty to their local landlords before loyalty to a constitution or abstract idea of citizenship. The rule of a tyrant may well have been preferable to the arbitrary violence and oppression of local landlords. Resistance to tyranny is only evident after the murder of Hipparchos, when the rule turned for the worse.

One has to raise the question whether Peisistratos was a demagogue basing his power on popular support in a fight against the aristocracy itself, or a traditional aristocrat using local adherents against the other aristocratic factions in an internal struggle for power. Peisistratos' disarming of the citizens contradicts his supposed power base as a hoplite general. His allies were the forces of other tyrants, especially cavalry. Only the very rich could afford to breed and maintain horses, and cavalry tactics was a hallmark of the nobility. The division line of the conflict runs between the families of the Alkmaionids and the Peisistratids, in what appears to be a pure factional struggle without active participation by the citizens for their own cause. Indeed, the citizens don't seem to be defined as a group at all at this point, other than as initial supporters of Peisistratos. On the other hand, the appearance of members of the Alkmaionid family among the archons even while the tyrants are in power weakens the argument that the political development of Athens was driven purely by rivalry within the elite. It seems like the tyranny was maintained with quite a bit of manoeuvring and cooperation between rival factions. Maybe the rule of the Peisistratids served the interests of the rest of the elite as well, as it stabilised political in-fighting and suppressed the potentially disruptive effects of popular participation in politics.

The extensive building projects of the Peisistratids, and ensuing raise in taxes, may very well have contributed to their downfall. Aristotle mentions the confiscation of private property as a reason for resistance to tyrants (Arist. Pol 1311a22 ff.). A tale concerns an incognito Peisistratos and a poor farmer, who complains that not only does he harvest none but evil and pain, but of that, Peisistratos snatches a tenth (Ath.pol. 16.6). This indicates that the taxes, even at a mere ten percent of income, was a burden to the poor, and a cause for grievances.

6.5 Excursus I: The seisachtheia from an Ancient Near Eastern perspective

The Solonian laws and the seisachtheia, i.e. the shaking off of burdens, is by no means a singular phenomenon in ancient political history. In the Ancient Near East, political reforms often took the form of a royal intervention on behalf of the weak against the strong. The king is the protector of widows and orphans, and there is evidence for measures against debt-bondage. Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian kings commemorated their legal reforms in

inscriptions on buildings and statues and on clay tablets. The laws of the Babylonian king Hammurabi of the 2nd millennium BCE are well known, but these already had ancient predecessors.

The earliest documented Ancient Near Eastern social reform is that of Entemena, *ensi* of Lagaš ca. 2430. In an inscription, he says that he let the children return to their mothers and the mothers to their children.⁹⁸ The Sumerian term for “allowing to return” is *ama-gi₄*, from the Ur III-period written *ama-ar-gi₄*, which means “to return to the mother”. *Amargi* is predominantly used for the freeing of slaves. In the text of Entemena, it is said that he established an *amargi* from grain taken as a loan and paid back with interest.⁹⁹ He also let citizens of the cities Uruk, Larsa and Patibira return into the hands of their city gods (Edzard 1974, 146). The risk of debt-bondage is thus removed by royal intervention (*ibid.* 147).

The paradigmatic example of an Ancient Near Eastern “*seisachtheia*” are the reforms of Uru’inimginak,¹⁰⁰ the last king of the Sumerian city-state of Lagaš (text in Sollberger 1956, 50-53; Steible 1982, 288-312). His reform are the eldest source to a ruler’s attempt at bettering the conditions for his people. He belongs to the end of the chronological period called Early Dynastic III (26th to 24th century BCE), immediately preceding the rise of Akkad as a world empire¹⁰¹ (Edzard 1974, 145). Lagaš was permanently in conflict with its neighbouring city-states for supremacy in the region, especially over the rights to water-resources (Edzard 1991, 60-2). The situation preceding the reforms is obscure. There seems to have been widespread corruption in Lagaš, especially among bureaucrats and temple executives, who used the property of the temples for their own purposes. There is also mention of overcharging for the rendering of services.

Uru’inimginak is chosen by the city-god Ningirsu, and instructed to right the wrongs of the city (Ukg. 4.7.29-8.13; Ukg.5.12-26). He gives the property of the temples back to the gods, and nobody will be acting as commissary (*maškim*) (Ukg.4.9.12-25; Ukg.5.20-31). The king further grants freedom to the citizens of Lagaš who lived in debt bondage, and cleansed those who had been involved in (accused of?) theft and murder. Ningirsu had instructed Uru’inimginak to see to it that the orphan and the widow were not delivered unto the mighty (Ukg.4.12.13-28; Ukg.5.11.20-12.4.).

⁹⁸ IV 1) 2) *ama dumu-ni i-gi₄* 3) *dumu ama-ni i-gi₄* (text in M. Lambert: *La Revue du Louvre et de Musées de France* 21, Nr. 4-5 (1971) 3ff, passage quoted in Edzard 1974, 146).

⁹⁹ IV 4-5) *ama-gi₄ še-ur₅-ka e-ĝar* (text in M. Lambert: *La Revue du Louvre et de Musées de France* 21, Nr. 4-5 (1971) 3ff, passage quoted in Edzard 1974, 146).

¹⁰⁰ In older literature, this king is named Urukagina, because the sign INIM was read KA by Sumerologists. The final -k is now in common usage, as Sumerian words are thought to have had final consonants (which are mostly unwritten).

Ur-Nammu was the first king of the Ur III dynasty (2112-2004), after the fall of the Akkadian empire (Edzard 1974, 146).¹⁰² He wrote the first known “code of laws”, called the Codex Ur-Nammu. Its paragraphs are rendered in protasis and apodosis; “in case of A, the consequence will be B”. In the prologue, he states that in his day, justice was established. Conditions were bad at the beginning of his rule. Ur-Nammu established freedom in Sumer and Akkad, the orphan would not be left under the power of the rich, nor the widow given over to the mighty. He who had a shekel would not be put under he who had a whole mina (Edzard 1991, 68 and 76). Another “code of laws” is attributed to the king Lipit-Ištar of Isin (1934-1924 BCE) (Edzard 1974, 150). In the prologue to his laws Lipit-Ištar states that he had let those citizens of Nippur, Ur, Isin, the sons and daughters of Sumer and Akkad, who were subject to the yoke of slavery, take amargi (Edzard 1974, 150).¹⁰³ He also probably diminished the number of days of compulsory public work (ibid. 151).

The Babylonian king Hammurapi (1792-1750 BCE) is famous for his laws. They are written in Old Babylonian on a stela of basalt, showing Hammurapi before the sun-god Šamaš. In about 280 paragraphs, cases are presented and the legal consequences described (text in *ANET*³, 163-180; Borger 1979a, 2-46; Borger 1979b, Tafeln 1-30). A wide range of subjects are treated, from manslaughter to the neglect of ditches. The principle of justice is revenge; it is a *lex talionis*, and many sentences follow the proverbial “an eye for an eye”. In the prologue and the epilogue to the Codex Hammurapi, the king states the purpose of his legislation: Justice shall prevail in the land, the evil and wicked shall be destroyed, and the strong shall not oppress the weak (*dannum enšam ana la habālim*) (Cod.Ham. prolog. i 31-9; epilog. rev. xxiv 60-1).

The edict of Ammi-šaduqa of Babylon (1646-1626 BCE) is preserved in a number of letters in which the king annuls existing debts; private debt as well as debt to the palace.¹⁰⁴

The institution of an economic amnesty is known from the Neo-Assyrian Empire (10th to 7th century BCE): The (*an*)*durāru* was a decree in which the king annulled sales made under economic pressure, also of slaves. The purchase price will be refunded to the buyer, just as the land or persons would revert to the seller. There are examples of people under siege selling their children to alleviate famine, who later seek to document that these sales were

¹⁰¹ Uru'inimginak was king of Lagaš ca. 2370 (Edzard 1974, 145)

¹⁰² Ur-Nammu ruled from 2111-2094 (Edzard 1974, 146).

¹⁰³ II 1-15 (Edition F. R. Steele: AJA 52 [1948] = Museum Monograph, Univ. Museum, Philadelphia: 1) [u₄]-bi-a 2) [dumu-ni]tá dumu-MÍ- 3) [nibru^{ki}] 4) [dumu-ni]tá dumu-MÍ- 5)uri^{ki}-[ma] 6) dumu-nitá dumu-MÍ- 7) [i]-si-in^{ki}-na 8) [dumu-ni]tá dumu-MI- 9) [ki-en]-gi-ki-uri 10) [lú gú]-bi'-a 11) [šusu]l²¹ Nam-ir 12) [hu]-mu-ni-ib-AG 13) [am]a-ar-gi₄-bi 14) [x]-mu-a 15) [x]-bi-šè hé-bí-dab₅ (passage quoted in Edzard 1974, 150,n.25).

made under pressure. It is uncertain, however, whether the *(an)durāru* was put in effect in these cases (Postgate 1976, 21-22).

Dietz Otto Edzard (1974) has reviewed the evidence for social reforms in the Ancient Near East, and he asks whether it is anachronistic to speak of “social reform” at this time. According to Edzard, a reform in the sense of political action aiming at bettering the conditions for a group of the populace or a class of people is not what is found in these early texts. Neither is there evidence for legislation aiming at diminishing the difference between social groups. Edzard asks whether the passages concerning the protection of widows and orphans and the emancipation of slaves were literary *topoi* (Edzard 1974, 145).

Uru'inimginak confronted a situation where the *maškim* (commissary) encroached on the rights of the *sanga* (highest temple executive) (Edzard 1974, 147). His reforms seem to have been a clerical restoration: Ningirsu, Baba and Šulšagna are established as proprietors of the fields and houses of the lord of the city, his wife and the crown prince respectively. The lord of the city is the delegate of the city god, but has no right to use temple property for his own purposes. This has been a support for the thesis of a Sumerian temple city (ibid. 148). This term is now fallen into disuse (ibid. 148 n. 16).¹⁰⁵ The reforms seem rather to indicate a conflict between the temples and private landowners. The king attempted to save the redistributive equilibrium by taking action against an increasing privatisation of land (Gebhard Selz, lecture at the FU Berlin, 16.12.02). Diakonoff (1974), in examination of the documents referring to sale of land from the 27th to 21st century BCE, found no evidence that temple land could be bought or sold (Diakonoff 1974, 7). But some land belonging to the family communities could be sold by the head of the family or an elected representative (ibid. 8). Van de Mieroop argues that conflict between secular and religious leaders in Lagaš is noticeable. The “Reforms of Uru'inimginak” do not imply that all lands are placed in the hands of the gods, but is a measure for the king to take control of all temple land himself (van de Mieroop 1997 [1999], 33).

¹⁰⁴ cf. Edikt §13 and 16, text in *Studia et documenta ad iura Orientis antiqui pertinentia* V, 1958, quoted in Edzard 1972, 152 n. 32.

¹⁰⁵ For a historiography of the concept and a refutation of the term, see Foster 1981: The causal connection between regulation of water resources and despotic or theocratic rule cannot be maintained in light of the evidence for autocratic government and complex bureaucracy long *before* any evidence of large-scale irrigation works (Foster 1981, 228). Beside temple property, there was private land and land held in common by kinship groups (ibid. 229). The temple-state hypothesis is not actually proven by the evidence cited to support it, i.e. the “Reforms of Uru'inimginak” and the archive from the temple of Baba. Even though Uru'inimginak states that he put lands of the city ruler under the ownership of the gods, this does not mean that this was an ancient practice, or that the temples controlled all lands (Foster 1981, 240-1). Gadd stated that the archives from Lagaš are insufficient proof that all land belonged to the temple. The mention of poor people's orchards in the “Reforms

The Sumerians seem to have become impoverished by intensive taxation in the 3rd millennium (Gebhard Selz, Lecture at FU Berlin 16.12.2002). Uru'inimginak aimed at protecting the individual from his neighbour. The use of the term "reform" depends on the exact meaning of the term *ama-gi*₄. As in the text of Entemena, it is used in connection with "interest" (*ur*₅-*ra*). This allows a minimum of the obliteration of debts, if not a "social reform" as such (Edzard 1974, 149).

The edict of Ammi-šaduqa was probably a measure against impending economic chaos, resulting from large numbers of free citizens having fallen into debt-bondage (Edzard 1974, 152-3). It was no reform, however, since it was an edict concerning the obliteration of debt for a specific year, and that year only. The Akkadian term used is *mīšaram šakānum*, i.e. "to establish justice".¹⁰⁶ It is known that debtors sometimes had to sell their own persons, their wives or their children (ibid. 154).

There is much controversy over whether the codices of Ur-Nammu, Lipit-Ištar and Hammurapi were really codified laws. There are no known quotations from the paragraphs in the codices in any legal document. This should indicate that the laws were collections of earlier sentences passed by judges in the various courts, and not a systematic legal framework to be used as a codified law throughout the kingdom. But Hammurapi says in the epilogue to his laws, that the citizens shall go before his statue (where the laws were written) and consult them whenever he is involved in a legal case (Cod. Ham. epilog. rev. xxv, 8-19). This should indicate that the laws were intended for practical use. Whether this happened in real life is another matter, and the laws do not cover every aspect of civic life. Rather than abstract principles of justice, one finds a collection of paradigmatic cases, which would be useful in situations where a court or a jury asked what the verdict was the last time something similar occurred.

The similarities between the Solonian reforms and these Ancient Near Eastern political measures are striking. All aim at emancipating citizens from debt-bondage. They do not aim at redistributing property among the citizens. The reforms of Uru'inimginak also seem to include a general asylum for criminals. Why this was done is another question. There might, of course, have been economic reasons for freeing those bound in service to their creditors. Another reason might have been to provide fighters in a military crisis. Athens was

of Uru'inimginak" indicate that private property existed, as do document of private sale of commodities (Gadd 1971, 130-1).

¹⁰⁶The letters are introduced with *aššum šarrum mīšaram ana mātim iškunu*, "because the king established just order". The noun is a participle of the root 'ŠR, ešēru(m) in Š-stem, which means "put in good condition, in

involved in a war with Megara at the time of the reforms of Solon, and Lagaš warred regularly with its neighbours, especially Umma. The kings themselves, however, emphasise the moral aspect of their measures: It is wrong that people are in debt-bondage, and that widows and orphans are abused by the rich. Widows and orphans were at any rate of no interest for the war-effort, so a sense of decency should perhaps not be ruled out as a further motive for the reformers. The shaking off of burdens is a political measure as old as politics itself, and can be traced throughout almost the entire Mesopotamian history, from Early Dynastic III to Neo-Assyrian times. It is not an Athenian innovation, rather, it stands at the end of an ancient political tradition.

6.6 Excursus II: Peisistratos, Athena and the Ancient Near East

An interesting episode in the early career of Peisistratos, is where he is brought back to Athens by “Athena”. This stratagem fits the Ancient Near Eastern theme of the hero or king as a personal favourite of the god or goddess of the city. In Mesopotamia, each city was the residency of a god or a goddess, who lived in the temple. The king (*lugal*) or lord (*ensi*) of the city also acted as the priest of the cult of the city’s deity (cf. Moortgat 1950 [1984], 236-7) .

According to F. A. M. Wiggermann (2003), Mesopotamian religion was closely tied to societal development, and changing concepts of power are mirrored in changes in the religious institutions. Sumerian gods were viewed as kings and rulers with terrestrial homes in temples. The gods spoke through human representatives, the en or ensí, but remained the real rulers. The relationship between the god and the en is explained as one of kinship, achieved through marriage, adoption or (fictive) descent. Uruk is the first well documented urban society. The ruler of Uruk was the goddess Inanna, who owned the city. The human ruler of the city was the husband of Inanna, whose responsibility was to keep her domain in good order.¹⁰⁷

Each Mesopotamian city had its own city-deity. The system of the en as the consort of the deity, was later replaced by a new system where the king (*lugal*) was chosen by the king of the gods, Enlil. The *lugal* ruled over all the Sumerian cities, which still had individual ens as well. The *lugal*-ship went from city to city. The Assembly of the gods decided whether the kingship should be moved to a new city, and bestowed it upon a new ruler. This concept of power became the predominant one in Mesopotamia. Royal inscriptions of Old Babylonian

order”, corresponding to Sumerian *níg-si-sá* (cf. Black, George and Postgate: A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian; Edzard 1974, 153).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. the Athenian institution where the basileus’ wife joins Dionysos in a sacred marriage (Arist. *Ath.pol.* 3.5)

kings (*Cod. Ham., Hammurapi Borsippa, Samsuiluna A*) emphasise how Enlil and the other gods gave the king kingship over the four corners of the earth, the people and the land and look in favour on their rule (F. A. M. Wiggermann, lectures at FU Berlin 28.4 and 30.4 2003).

Van de Mieroop (1997) emphasises that developments in urbanism, religion and government are all intertwined in Mesopotamian political history. The king might be either termed the son of a god, adopted by a goddess through breast feeding and thus adopted into the circle of gods, as on the Stela of the Vultures (quoted in van de Mieroop 1997 [1999], 33), or presented as the consort of the city goddess. Eventually, the king would unite both the role of high priest and secular ruler, as is evident from Uru'inimginak's reforms. Van de Mieroop argues that these were presented as a measure to return stolen land to the gods in their temples, but in reality placed all temple domains under direct control of the king. Secular rule was never separated from religion. The temple and the palace are urban institutions (van de Mieroop 1997 [1999], 33).

The city is so crucial to Mesopotamian civilization not only for its economic and administrative role, but also for its religious significance. Each city was the home of a god or a goddess, which was patron deity of the city. Van de Mieroop proposes individual panthea for each settlement as the origins of this institution, the city god thus being the original head of each pantheon (van de Mieroop 1997 [1999], 46). The gods had built the cities as their own dwellings. Decline of a city signified the god's departure from his abode. This concept was continued even in times of imperial dominance, the god of the dominant city rising to become the patron deity of a larger area, such as Marduk of the Babylonians or Aššur of the Assyrians (ibid. 47-8). Mesopotamian kingship was considered to reside in one place at the time, as is evident from the *Sumerian King List*. Later changes in power is described in dynastic terms, the rulers of a given city having power for some generations before losing it to another city. In reality, each city must have had its individual ruler as well (ibid.49).

The temple was a household, the dwelling of the god, just like the palace was the household of the king (Oppenheim 1964 [1977], 96). The relationship between gods and kings is, especially in Sumerian sources, couched in terms of family relationships. The exact difference between the divine relation to the *en* and the *lugal* is not clear. Later, there is a marked difference between northern and southern concepts of kingship: The Assyrian kings were the high priests of Aššur, performing sacrifices and influencing both temple and cult, whereas the Babylonian kings were admitted into the cella of Marduk only once a year (ibid. 98-9).

A city might have more temples and gods than the patron deity, but the relationship between the patron god and the king was special. The king was the chosen one of the deity, and was given kingship by the god. On the metaphysical plane, this took place as an introduction of the future king into the heavenly court, an episode frequently depicted on cylinder seals. On the physical plane, this might be given representation as the enactment of a sacred marriage, *hieros gamos*, between the king and (the priestess of) the city's deity. Typically, the deity choosing the king is a goddess, like Inanna/Ištar, her decision being sanctioned by Enlil, the king of the gods in the *puhrum*, the Assembly in Heaven.

The personal relationship between a hero or king and a goddess is evident from the Homeric epics: Odysseus is the favourite of Athena; Paris is the favourite of Aphrodite and so forth. There is also evidence that each Greek city had its own god or gods. The gods are divided over the fate of Troy not only for the sake of its inhabitants and the heroes fighting on either side, but also because of the city itself. The city is favoured by Zeus, as well as Poseidon and Apollo. Athena, of course, has a special relationship to Athens, whereas the Dioskouroi had a special relation to the Spartan kings. The Greek temple itself was considered the dwelling of the god, and not to be invaded by humans.

These groups of evidence combined give reason to the apparently naïve scheme of Megakles: By having Athena bring Peisistratos back to Athens, his rule is sanctioned by the goddess as her favourite. This might also help explain the lacking resistance to his establishment of tyranny. The Peisistratids, it must be remembered, nurtured close ties with the Near East and the Persians, and might have been inspired by Near Eastern royal ceremonial. The combination of the Greek concepts of a city deity and divine favouritism with the Mesopotamian concept of investiture through a goddess proved most effective, even though later writers misinterpreted the significance of this tactical move as a silly masquerade.

The last tyrant, Hippias, returned at the Battle of Marathon in 490, accompanying the Persian king. Before the battle, he had a dream of sleeping by his mother, which he interprets as an omen of returning to Athens. But as he is rallying troops on the beach, he starts to sneeze and cough violently and loses a tooth. He rummages about for the tooth without success, and declares that he will now never recover Athens. It no longer belongs to him, and he will not get it in his power. The part of the country belonging to Hippias had fallen to the tooth (Hdt. 6.107). Looking beyond the rationalisation of Herodotos' rendering of the resignation of Hippias, it is clear that Hippias realised that he had lost the mandate to rule,

signified by the loss of his tooth. Like kingship in the Ancient Near East, the tyranny of Athens was granted by the gods, and could also be taken away by them.

A final point is the supposedly Phoenician descent of the tyrant slayers. Why does Herodotos mention this? Is it just to prepare the reader for his discussion of the Kadmean letters and the Phoenician source for the Greek alphabet? The passage as it stands is obscure, but might make sense if it is considered in light of the later myths of the tyrant slayers as the originators of Athenian democracy. Phoenician constitutions had a high repute in antiquity as moderate democracies, and seem to have had elements of popular rule since the Late Bronze Age. Might the Phoenician origin of the tyrant slayers be an allusion to this tradition of Phoenician eunomia? It is strange, at any rate, that the nationalist Athenians would preserve a myth about their constitution being saved by foreigners, leaving the Athenian demos a minor role in the process, and ignoring the role of Kleisthenes.

6.7 Conclusion

It is interesting to note how most scholars take Thukydides' side in the debate on who actually liberated the Athenians. This view is consistent with the idea that political reform was only possible through a Great Man, a reformer like Solon or Kleisthenes to guide the people. The opinions vary between the extremes of McGlew (1998) claiming that the Athenian demos came to power modelling themselves on the Tyrants, to Meier (1980), who maintains that the developments up to and including Kleisthenes were dictated by the competition for power inside the aristocracy itself. Bleicken (1995) seems to offer a compromise, by saying that the demos was politically mobilised by the reforms of Solon, but outwitted by the Peisistratids. The tyranny ended the domination of the aristocrats, thus paving the way for democratic rule.

The very evidence from Thukydides that most people were in error regarding the role of the tyrant slayers is interesting for what it says about the self-image of the Athenian demos. Popular myths about direct violent action against tyrants are an implicit threat to any would-be oppressor of the people. This was made explicit in drinking-songs encouraging the imitation of the deed of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, and celebrating them as bringers of isonomia. Also, this myth takes the emphasis away from the role played by the Spartans in changing the constitution. On the other hand, some Athenians were aware of the actual facts, since they feared something similar to the Spartan invasion might happen again in the wake of the Mutilation of the Herms (Thuc. 6.53). The opinion of the demos seems confused over its

own role in the affair, although some people obviously believed that democracy was the result of the direct action of the Athenian demos and Harmodios.

The action of Harmodios and Aristogeiton seems to have been more effective in later myth than in contemporary politics. The story emphasised the righteous killing of unjust rulers, and consolidated the demos as a political unity against tyranny and oppression. Any practical consequences of the killing of Hipparchos are difficult to find, except the harsher rule of Hippias. But this is important, since it shows that the Peisistratids felt threatened by popular revolt, and realised their precarious position as rulers. The Peisistratids obviously feared a revolt. At the same time, they banished members of rival families, according to the rules of aristocratic rivalry. That Harmodios and Aristogeiton belonged outside this group seems evident. The demos indeed remained passive until rallied by the Alkmaionids, which might indicate that they tolerated tyrant rule. At the same time, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, and not the aristocratic Alkmaionids, were praised in song as the liberators of the people. The myth of the tyrant slayers depicts the Athenian citizens as they would like to see themselves: As fearless fighters against oppression and tyranny.

The Near Eastern parallels to the reforms of Solon show that political action to alleviate the economic situation of the citizens was no novelty peculiar to Athens. The return of Peisistratos demonstrates that events in Athens might be explained by references to practices in the Near East; the conceptual framework of the Greeks probably included Near Eastern practices, which they either knew from direct observation, or from reports of travellers. It might even be that the relationship between a deity, the city and its ruler is a direct cultural continuity between the Greek polis and the Mesopotamian city-state.

7 The Reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes

7.1 Introduction

Few Athenian statesmen have been attributed such overshadowing importance as Kleisthenes; as the reformer who introduced democracy to the Athenians, he sided with the demos against the Athenian elite families and the Spartans. The reform of the demes meant the withering of local power bases for the aristocratic factions. Thereby, genuine popular participation in politics became possible. The members of the demos acted not merely as a cheering crowd behind wealthy patrons, but as active participants in public debate, legislation and courts of justice. The work of Kleisthenes was brought further by Ephialtes, who stripped the Council of the Areopagos of many of its responsibilities and conferred them to the Council and the Assembly, thereby ending the era of aristocratic dominance in polis-affairs.

Were these reforms the origins of democracy? Were they unique to Athens? Was Athenian democracy a result of long-term developments, democratic reforms or both?

These questions are the point of departure for this thesis as a whole. I have argued that many aspects of Athenian democracy are similar to developments and institutions in the Ancient Near East. It is necessary to determine whether Athenian democracy should be described as the result of an internal political development, or in a wider perspective, as a phenomenon related to political structures in the Near East. Therefore, this chapter will dwell at length on the political changes in late 6th and early 5th century Athens. Are these changes better understood as isolated phenomena peculiar to Athens, or may a comparison with Ancient Near Eastern sources explain them further?

The main events in Athens in the late 6th and early 5th century are described by Herodotos, in the Aristotelian¹⁰⁸ *Athēnaiōn Politeia*, and further in the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarchos. The chronologically closest source is Herodotos, whereas Plutarchos is fairly late. Therefore, one should put most emphasis on the version of Herodotos. Neither Aristotle nor Plutarchos differ much from Herodotos in the general outline of events, but they both add details which are not found in Herodotos. The events, however, are not the main problem. The main problem concerns the motives of the reformers. There is an ambiguity in the Classical tradition, and this is the background for a debate on both the motives for, and the consequences of the reforms. Did the reforms result in democracy, and did the reformers intend democracy?

¹⁰⁸ The work, also referred to as the *Constitution of the Athenians*, was either written by Aristotle or one of his pupils. For the sake of convenience, I will refer to the writer as Aristotle.

The reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes are interpreted differently. Some view Kleisthenes as a shrewd opportunist who used the demos to crush the Peisistratids. Others praise him as a selfless revolutionary leader. In recent literature, scholars tend to tone down the role played by his person altogether, seeking to explain the events from the view-point of the demos rather than from a single prominent leading figure. The view of historical changes as brought about by Great Men has lost favour. But there is general agreement that the reforms of Kleisthenes caused profound changes in the Athenian political system. This is not the case with the reforms of Ephialtes. Scholars differ in their views, in particular because little is known about the historical figure Ephialtes. There are two main views: Either Ephialtes completed the work of Kleisthenes, and introduced radical democracy, or the reforms of Ephialtes were of minimal importance, and democracy was established by Kleisthenes.

What was the nature of the reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes? Under which circumstances were they enacted, and which processes shaped them? Are they rational political measures, or cultural phenomena? The previous chapters have dealt extensively with parallels and similarities between the Ancient Near East and Archaic Athens. How do the reforms fit in with those parallels? If similarities do exist, how should one interpret them?

I will present the events between 508/7 and 462/1 under separate headings, as separate parts, starting with Kleisthenes, continuing with the time between the reforms, and ending with Ephialtes. Under each heading, I will present the relevant sources and discuss the main differing scholarly interpretations of them. The results will be compared with parallel evidence from the Ancient Near East.

7.2 The reforms of Kleisthenes

7.2.1 The sources

The reforms of Kleisthenes were enacted in 508/7, after the ousting of the Peisistratids, and the defeat of the reaction which was led by Isagoras and supported by Kleomenes and the Spartans. Their background and contents are described by Herodotos and in the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia*.

Herodotus says that after the Spartans had ended the Tyranny, Athens thrived and grew even more prosperous. Two men were influential in the city; Kleisthenes, who had convinced Pythia at Delphi to make the Spartans abolish tyranny in Athens, and Isagoras, a man from an esteemed family (*oikos dokimos*). These two men strived for power, and since

Kleisthenes was the weaker, he included the demos into his faction of followers (*ton dēmon prosetairizetai*) (Hdt. 5.63-66).

Formerly, the Athenians had been divided into four *phylai*, named after the four sons of Ion.¹⁰⁹ Kleisthenes abolished these old phylai and divided the Athenians into ten new phylai, named after eponymous national heroes (*hērōes epichōrioi*) and Aias (Hdt. 5.66). Herodotos reckons that in doing this, Kleisthenes imitated his grandfather Kleisthenes, tyrant of Sikyon (Hdt. 5.67). This Kleisthenes had given the Dorian phylai new names, so that they would not have the same names in Sikyon as among their enemies, the Argives. In doing so, he mocked the Sikyonians, naming each *phylē* after swine (*hyos*), donkey (*onos*) and pig (*choiros*), except his own phyle, which was named the Archelaoi, after his own power (*archē*). These names were altered again, sixty years after the death of Kleisthenes (Hdt. 5.68). Kleisthenes the Athenian supposedly changed the names of the Athenian phylai, because he did not want them to have the same names as the Ionian phylai. When he had won the whole demos, which he had formerly pushed aside (*ton dēmon proteron apōsmenon*), for his own side (*hē heōtou moira*), he renamed the phylai and increased their numbers. There were now ten phylarches instead of four. The *dēmes* were divided by ten according to the phylai. With the demos on his side, he was by far superior to his adversaries (Hdt. 5.69).

Isagoras tried to counter this by sending for king Kleomenes and the Spartans again. Kleomenes was his guest friend from the time of the siege of the Peisistratids, and rumoured to be in a liaison with his wife. Kleomenes sent a herald demanding that Kleisthenes and many other Athenians with him were banished, claiming they were polluted by bloodshed. There was a curse on the Alkmaionids for murder, of which Kleisthenes and his friends were innocent. In this, Kleomenes was instructed by Isagoras (Hdt. 5.70). The curse of the Alkmaionids came from the murder of Kylon, who had aspired to tyranny at Athens and later been killed although he left his refuge under truce (Hdt. 5.71).

When Kleisthenes learnt of the demand of Kleomenes, he left Athens of his own accord. Nevertheless, Kleomenes arrived in Athens with a small force and expelled seven hundred Athenian families (*epistia Athēnaiōn*), chosen by Isagoras. Then, they attempted to abolish the Council (*tēn boulēn katalyein epeirato*), and hand over the rule to three hundred of Isagoras' fellow conspirators. The Council protested, however, and Kleomenes, Isagoras and their adherents occupied the Acropolis. The rest of the Athenians (*Athēnaiōn hoi loipoi*) were of one mind, and laid siege to them for two days. On the third, they made a truce that the

¹⁰⁹ These were purely religious organs.

Spartans leave the country. This had already been told Kleomenes in a prophetic saying (*phēmē*). Kleomenes and the Spartans left the country, and their adherents were bound and later executed (Hdt. 5.72). The Athenians sent for Kleisthenes and the seven hundred exiled families, and also sent a messenger to Sardes to become allies of the Persians (*symmachiēn boulomenoi poiēsasthai pros Persas*) (Hdt. 5.73).

Aristotle states that Kleisthenes divided the citizens into ten phylai¹¹⁰ instead of four, because he wanted to mix them up (*anameixai boulomenos*) so that more had a share in the constitution (*Ath. Pol.* 21.2). Kleisthenes established a council of five hundred members instead of four hundred, fifty from each phyle (ibid. 21.3). Attica was divided by demes into thirty parts; ten in the city, ten on the coast and ten in the inland, and he called these parts thirds (*trittys*). He allotted three to each phyle, so that each phyle had a share in all three regions (*topoi*). He made those who lived together in each deme *dēmotes*; the citizens were called by their deme, and not by their patronymic (ibid. 21.4). An eponymous hero was appointed for each phyle, chosen by the oracle at Delphi from a list of a hundred founding heroes (ibid. 21.6). Kleisthenes also enacted the law of ostracism, one of several measures to please the masses (ibid. 22.1). The law was enacted to prevent men of influence to usurp leadership (ibid. 22.4).

7.2.2 A revolution by the demos, or a reform by Kleisthenes?

Herodotos says that Kleisthenes made the people his friends. He is quite explicit, however, concerning why Kleisthenes became the ally of the people: He had formerly not cared about them at all, but needed their support against his adversaries. This strategy was successful, and he prevailed against his enemies. He was not involved in the public revolt against Isagoras and the Spartans, but was sent for along with the other exiles after the event. The masses had been of one mind in preserving the Council, and defend themselves against the oligarchic coup-makers. The account of Herodotos attributes no initiative to Kleisthenes in defending the Council or ousting the invaders. The demos took action on their own accord. Afterwards, they sent for the exiled families and sought alliance with the Persians; they took measures to defend themselves against renewed attacks by the Spartans.

Both Herodotos and Aristotle agree that Kleisthenes divided the Athenians into ten new phylai, after he had won their support. Herodotos argues that Kleisthenes established the new phylai because he did not want the Athenian phylai to have the same names as the Ionian

¹¹⁰ These were political divisions.

ones, in imitation of Kleisthenes the tyrant of Sikyon. Kleisthenes had changed the names of the phylai in Sikyon out of enmity against the Dorian Argives. It seems strange, however, that his phyle-reform was intended to mock the Sikyonians. One presumes that the Sikyonian phylai would be given better names than the old ones, not worse, if the motivation for the change was to get rid of names which resembled those of their enemies, the Argives, to a negative effect. It is also not clear what Kleisthenes the Athenian had against the Ionians (in all probability those of Asia Minor).

Aristotle has a different explanation: Kleisthenes wanted to mix up the citizens, so that more had a share in the constitution. In Aristotle's view, Kleisthenes had democratic intentions; he intended the reforms to facilitate a broader political participation. This is against the view of Herodotos, and is no supplemental explanation to his. Aristotle gives further information, which is not in Herodotos: The detailed description of the reformation of the demes, and the account of the eponymous heroes. These are not only additional details, but serve to explain the rationality behind the reforms. Through this information, it becomes plausible that Kleisthenes aimed at mixing up the population, to secure broader participation in the constitution. The reforms were enacted like they are described by Aristotle. Herodotos probably found the details unnecessary for his narrative.

In Herodotos' view, Kleisthenes was an aristocrat who strengthened his own group against that of Isagoras by seeking the friendship of the people. When he had won them to his side, he reformed the phylai and the demes, with no particular political intentions. Isagoras worked out the balance by getting support from the Spartans, and Kleisthenes went into exile. The people ousted the Spartans, and afterwards sent for Kleisthenes again: The people were the political force.

In Aristotle's view, Kleisthenes reformed the phylai for a definite purpose. Aristotle gives a detailed account of the content of these reforms. Kleisthenes' intention was to make political participation in Athens possible for more citizens. Presumably, the old division of demes prevented this. Other measures were taken to prevent tyranny: Kleisthenes was a democratic leader.

7.2.3 Interpretations of Kleisthenes

Fustel de Coulanges (1879 [1996]) argued that Kleisthenes, a member of an aristocratic family in opposition to the Peisistratids, found a way to secure Athens from future domination by a single family. Solon had preserved the ancient religious organisation of Athenian society,

keeping the mighty families in power. The politically emancipated peasants were still bound to the old cultic bodies, obeying the old structures of power. Kleisthenes addressed this problem by abolishing the old four phylai and introducing ten phylai with new eponymous heroes (de Coulanges 1879 [1996], 276-7). The demes of Attica were distributed among these new phylai, and the citizens were designated membership in phylai according to residence, regardless of birth or former status. The priesthoods of the new cults were independent of the old priestly families. Religious and political bonds were severed, and society was thoroughly reformed (ibid. 278-9).

The new society was characterised by its emphasis on the common good, *to koinon*, which took the place of the old religion. The constitution and the laws were viewed as relative and subject to change, and did not represent an absolute truth (de Coulanges 1879 [1996], 308-9). In addition to the archons came the elected *strategoï*. Whereas the role of the archons was cultic and judiciary, the strategoi held the practical political power (ibid. 310). The new regime, democracy, was a constitution demanding constant participation by the citizens: The Council made ready proposals for the Assembly to discuss, and anyone who wanted to could participate in the debate. No case had a given solution, and the Athenians demanded a thorough discussion of all affairs of state. This marked a great step away from the traditional religious society of sanctified authority (ibid. 320-1). The speaker had to make sure his proposals were not against the laws. The people, the real rulers, were infallible, whereas any speaker was held responsible for his own proposals (ibid. 321-2).

The conservative force in Athenian society was, according to Fustel de Coulanges, the hereditary cultic bodies. Through these, the peasants were dominated by the traditional elite, regardless of their freedom from debt-bondage. Coulanges' interpretation is an explanation of why the reforms of Solon were ineffective in freeing the peasants. The reforms of Kleisthenes, however, had an emancipating function, because they obliterated the correlation between religion, organised in hereditary phratries, and politics, organised in phylai based on geographical units, the demes. The cults of the new eponymous heroes meant opportunities for new people, outside the elite, to control cultic life. The thesis of Coulanges is to some extent outdated today, because of its almost exclusive focus on religious developments. To Coulanges, political freedom is a process of secularisation: Break with traditions is first and foremost a break with cultic tradition. The elite controlled society through the cultic bodies, and when the ties between political influence and religious power were broken, political freedom came as an almost natural consequence.

It may be argued that local domination of the peasants was not absolute, in the same way as the constitution after Kleisthenes was not altogether secular. It is difficult to reconstruct the society before the reforms of Solon. Fustel de Coulanges does not use Homeric or Hesiodic material for this, but relies on the *Athenaion Politeia* of Aristotle. The new regime did demand constant participation by the citizens, but the peasants were not foreign to the political experience of taking part in assemblies. De Coulanges has a good point when he argues that the new cults gave the citizens greater freedom. Freedom from traditional restraint and severance of bonds between the rich elite families and the cults are factors promoting political freedom, and determined the emergence of radical democracy. This is reminiscent of reforms of temple property in Mesopotamia, to which I will return further on.

Peter Spahn (1977) argues that Kleisthenes' inclusion of the demos into his circle of friends invoked a change in the whole way of polis government, and asks whether this was a democracy (Spahn 1977, 156). According to Spahn, developments under the tyrants seem to have promoted the formation of the polis, such as the disarmament and taxation of the citizens (ibid. 159). Peisistratos' introduction of new cultic forms in opposition to kin-based cults promoted the "Politisierung" of the demos (ibid. 160). The reaction of the demos against Isagoras, Kleomenes and the Spartans, however, was a surprise, and seemed an ungrateful return for the liberation from the tyrants.

The people were politically mobilised, a result of developments since the early 6th century. The inclusion of the demos in the *hetaireia* of Kleisthenes tilted the balance of the kinship society, and destroyed it utterly (Spahn 1977, 161-2). Spahn explains this new and unprecedented political involvement of the demos by arguing that Kleisthenes must have revealed his program of reforms before his exile (ibid. 162).

Spahn asks who had interest in supporting the reform of Kleisthenes. The reform of the phylai must have been important also on a local level because of the reorganisation of the demes. The demes were based on ancient rural local communities (ibid. 163-4). There seems to have been no conflict between the *thētes* and the "Mittelschicht", i.e. a group of citizens whose interests lay between those of the wealthy elite and the poor masses; the local assemblies of the rural communities were dominated by the "Mittelschicht" (ibid. 165-6).

Spahn's view of Athenian politics is one of long-term developments which take a sudden, unprecedented turn. In his view, the polis took shape under the tyrants. There are, however, good indications for an early polis in Homer and Hesiod. The political perspectives of the people changed under the tyrants: They viewed themselves as autonomous. This might well have been the case, since the tyrants reduced the influence of the aristocratic factions,

and Athenian society was polarised between the tyrants and the people. Kleisthenes promoted this autonomy by introducing the people into his circle of friends and followers. Spahn's main argument is that all Athenians, except the elite, were interested in political change. He terms the politically conscious segment of society a "Mittelschicht", a kind of middle class. The existence of this economic category as a self-defined social and political group is doubtful, and has no direct support in the sources.¹¹¹ In Spahn's reading of the sources, it took only the initiative of a leader to push things into motion. He emphasises the role played by Kleisthenes in inciting revolt against the oligarchs, and tries to reconcile Herodotos and Aristotle by arguing that Kleisthenes must have told the people of his plans before he went into exile. Acting on his promises, the people revolted against the invaders and the oligarchs. This would mean that Kleisthenes had a plan for a new constitution, thereby following Aristotle more than Herodotos. This coincided with a politically aware middle class, which was the result of developments in the late 6th century.

A scholar opposing this view is Josiah Ober (1989; 1996). He emphasises the role of the demos in his explanation of the events of 508/7. He terms this "the Athenian revolution", and argues that the reforms of Kleisthenes would have been void without the violent ousting of Isagoras and the Spartans. The demos acted in their own interest by protesting against Kleomenes' attempt at abolishing the *boulē*. This came as a result of preceding events, both the successful resistance to foreign invasions and the defence of the Solonic reform against a narrow elite (Ober 1996, 100). The riot of 508/7 was an act of political self-definition, in which the demos was united in rejecting Isagoras as the legitimate public authority. The demos became united with Kleisthenes as his *hetairoi*, his friends and followers, and elite and mass interest met in the demand for *isonomia* (ibid. 107). Rather than seeing Kleisthenes as a revolutionary leader, Ober sees him as an interpreter of the revolutionary statements and actions of the people. His reform is thus a fulfilment of the promise to his friends, the people, who had been active in ousting the foreign enemy (ibid. 108).

Ober has argued elsewhere (1989) that the tyrants replaced mass awe for the elite with mass awe for the state. Athenian society gradually came to consist of the citizens and the benevolent tyrant (Ober 1989, 67). Kleisthenes took advantage of the new civic consciousness of the Athenians by introducing them into his hetaireia. The demos was now sufficiently aware of themselves to act in concert. To obtain and keep their loyalty, Kleisthenes advocated a

¹¹¹ It is a German rendering of *hoi mesoi* (cf. Spahn 1977, 7-14), which is a rather abstract concept current in Greek political philosophy of the ideal citizen; one that is neither very rich nor without means, and lives a moderate life and has moderate opinions. He is the middle citizen.

series of constitutional reforms. These reforms emphasised the bonds between the citizens, and provided for widespread popular participation in the affairs of the state. Isagoras tried to counter Kleisthenes, but the demos reacted on their own against him and the Spartans (ibid. 68). According to Ober, Kleisthenes resorted to a politics of consensus to frame the newly discovered mass power of the Athenian demos (ibid. 69). The Athenian revolution was successful: An elite did not evolve to gain control of a bureaucracy; Athenian direct democracy refuted the “Iron Law of Oligarchy” (ibid. 15-16).¹¹²

Ober’s interpretation demonstrates the significance of Kleisthenes’ alliance with the people: Isonomia was a demand by the elite, because they viewed themselves as internally egalitarian, in opposition to the tyrants. The inclusion of the people into the circle of friends of an elite member broadened this demand, and made it irresistible. In Ober’s view, Kleisthenes realised that the elite and the people had a common interest, and later enacted reforms which catered to the public demand for isonomia. Clearly, Ober’s intention is to demonstrate that the people were the active part, much as it is described in Herodotos. He makes this view conform with the account of Aristotle by arguing that the reforms were Kleisthenes’ answer to the newly discovered autonomy of the people.

There are some difficulties in this interpretation, however: If Kleisthenes promoted constitutional reforms that secured the masses participation in politics, what place would be left for him? Did he introduce the reforms primarily because he wanted to keep the people on his side, in opposition to other elite factions? If Kleisthenes was interested in the support of the people to secure the power of his own faction, there must have been a latent conflict of interests between him and the people, who, according to Ober, wanted autonomy. In Ober’s interpretation, the tactics of Kleisthenes proved too effective: When Isagoras contested the reforms, the people made away with all resistance. They ended the game of power all in all; the people became sovereign. This left Kleisthenes little choice but to continue to serve the people, or go the same way as Isagoras, and leave Athens. Thus, Kleisthenes’ tactics represent the last gasp of the elite conflicts; after this, the demos became the rulers. Ober does little to explain the background for this change, however. The people became increasingly aware of their political power, but how? Was this a development unique to Athens at this time? Were

¹¹² The “Iron Law of Oligarchy” is a term used by Robert Michels (1915 [1958]) to describe what he perceives as an inevitable tendency for oligarchies to evolve in all human enterprises. In any political system, an elite will gain control of the bureaucracy. The Iron Law of Oligarchy makes direct democracy impossible (Michels 1913 [1958], 393-409, esp. 406-7). Michels analysed political (socialist) parties to determine the evolution of informal power-structures, but his conclusions have been widely influential, also on historians studying ancient societies.

the tyrants or Solon responsible for this, or was the autonomy of the people created by other developments?

Exactly this point has been criticised by Loren J. Samons II (1998 [2004]). He also blames Ober for ignoring the position of Kleisthenes as a member of the Athenian elite (Samons 1998 [2004], 113). Even though Ober claims to reject the treatment of Kleisthenes as a “Great Man”, he presents Solon and the tyrants as such, by making them responsible for creating a politically self-conscious citizenry (ibid. 114). Samons asks for evidence for Ober’s claim that the Athenians had a mass self-consciousness, and accuses Ober of ignoring Kleisthenes’ close ties to the Peisistratids. In his view, Kleisthenes innovation laid in his combination of tyrannical tactics of seeking support in the demos with the basic timocratic structure of polis-government, and making residency a criterion for citizenship, rather than the phratries (ibid. 115). Finally, Samons warns that the sources are too meagre to say anything about what Kleisthenes intended with his reforms, and that modern readings of the reforms are too influenced by the knowledge of the later, established Athenian democracy of the 5th century (ibid. 117-19).

Following Samons’ interpretation, Kleisthenes fails in his intention to become a tyrant or public leader. Although the tyrants did break down traditional structures of power to weaken the opposition of the aristocratic elite, it is difficult to agree that these were the tactics of Kleisthenes. Even though the sources do not allow a secure establishment of the motivations of Kleisthenes, it would seem self-contradictory for a would-be popular leader to ally oneself with the people to gain power, and then secure such extensive powers to the people through reforms that none were left for the reformer. Rather, it seems like the reforms were enacted to prevent further civil strife, much like the reforms of Solon. A reconciliation of elite and popular demands for isonomia would mean both an end to factions, a better defence against the Spartans, and a safe-guard against future tyrants. This is, however, no answer to whether the reforms were enacted to create a democracy or not.

A somewhat different approach to the development of politics in Athens is offered by Cynthia Farrar (1988). Her hypothesis is based on Greek philosophical developments: Athenians started thinking about themselves as autonomous agents in a political community. Ideas about freedom as self-government and absence from constraints made a self-governed community ruled by its citizens the ideal polity. She argues that Protagoras, Thukydides and Demokritos, through their examination of the sources to human well-being in a given, as opposed to ideal, society, are better sources to the thoughts behind democratic practice than Plato and Aristotle (Farrar 1988, 11-15).

Farrar analyses Greek intellectual development as a shift in the concept of responsibility. According to Farrar “man comes to differentiate himself more clearly from the social order, to mark the boundary between internal and external” in the period from Homer to Aischylos, (Farrar 1988, 19). This is a political transition, from rule by an external, mysterious divine order to rule by human law, in the polis. The transition was not absolute, however. Farrar terms this double causation; *nomos* was divine, and *eunomia* was a goddess (Farrar 1988, 20). Solon gave shape to the idea of the polis by redefining citizenship in Athens. The traditional aristocracy was absorbed into a system providing a political function to every free resident in Attica (ibid. 21). The traditional hierarchy was further weakened by the rule of the Peisistratids, contributing to the further unification and solidarity of the Athenians. With the Kleisthenic reforms undermining the local domination of aristocratic families, every Athenian was connected politically to a wider community. The political divide was from that moment onwards conceived as one between citizen and not-citizen (ibid. 21-22).

In Farrar’s analysis, Greek ideas about their own society find expression in the *Suppliants* by Aischylos: Whereas the Greek polis is typified by rule through persuasion and consent, the barbarian society provides no means for the reconciliation of personal freedom with political authority (Farrar 1988, 30-33).

Farrar’s analysis demonstrates the correlation between philosophical ideas and political action, but does not really explain why the Greeks became democrats. It rather serves as a reiteration of the view that Greek democracy was the result of Greek genius. On the other hand, there were periods in Greek history of intense intellectual activity: Philosophical examinations of established values changed the Greek view of the world. These ideas might in time have changed Greek political culture. Greek philosophy was to a high degree based on social life in the polis. Ideas and practices were linked to each other, and it is hard to accept that Greek thinking alone resulted in Athenian democracy. Farrar’s hypothesis is in some respect reminiscent of De Coulange’s, in its emphasis on emancipation through secularisation and freedom from religious authorities. The concept of double causation demonstrates how the philosophical development took place within traditions, which were gradually weakened by the progress of these same ideas. Greek ideas on political life may very well have been shaped during their time of colonisation, and experiences of a relative political order.

Christian Meier (1980) analyses the reforms of Kleisthenes in 508/7 as a pre-democratic measure, and asks whether the changes brought about by his reforms are sufficient to explain the emergence of democracy. Kleisthenes’ reforms meant a decisive step towards

regular participation of the masses in politics, i.e. isonomia. The term democracy as such, however, was not known at the time. The aim of the reforms must be examined in light of the situation in which the measures were taken. Kleisthenes himself was probably after personal power through the support of the people, but his ideas and motivations must have been in accordance with the views of his supporters (the demos) for the reforms to be successful (Meier 1980, 94-5). The rules of aristocratic rivalry were still in function after the tyranny of the Peisistratids, and Kleisthenes only sought the support of the demos against the other aristocratic families when his own faction was in the loss (ibid. 103).

The reforms of Kleisthenes made sure that every region was represented in each of the ten phylai. Thus, no phyle represented specific local interests. The members of each phyle were to have nothing but their citizenship in common (Meier 1980, 105).¹¹³ There are three ancient explanations to the reforms of Kleisthenes. All have the mixing up of the citizens as their point of departure: In the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia*, the motive of the reforms was to integrate new citizens through the phyle-reform. Aristotle argued in the *Politics* (1319b 19ff) that the reforms were to dissolve the old connections (*synētheiai hai proteron*). Plutarchos follows Aristotle, and claims the reforms aimed at unity and prosperity through a correct mixture of the citizens (Meier 1980, 106).

Meier argues that a reorganisation of the citizens alone is an insufficient explanation of how Kleisthenes broke the power of the other aristocrats over their clients (ibid. 109). He finds the answer in the preceding political development of Attica: The citizens were disgruntled by Isagoras' attempt to dissolve the *boulē*, and this anger was a basis for Kleisthenes' further actions against the aristocratic factions. The people demanded isonomia, because they understood each other as *homoioi*, i.e. similar.¹¹⁴ A new view of politics and the polis, which took place in the 6th century, created this demand. The traditional forms of aristocratic rule had lost, and tyranny failed in the long run to convince at least major parts of the Greek world.¹¹⁵ The opportunities of colonisation led to new expectations and demands, and the development of political thinking (Meier 1980, 117-8).

Kleisthenes had to devise something new in order to meet the demands of the citizens. To attack the existing constitution was not enough. As long as the bonds of clientship had

¹¹³“Nichts sollte den Phylengenossen gemeinsam sein als ihre Bürger-Eigenschaft” (Meier 1980, 105).

¹¹⁴ Meier analyses this as a general development in the Archaic age, and quotes Herodotos' account of how Maiandrios invested the power on Samos in the people after the death of Polykrates: The citizens are *androi homoioi*, i.e. equal men. Maiandros says that he will establish isonomia by placing government into the midst of the citizens: *egō de es meson tēn archēn tithēis isonomiēn hymin proagoreuō* (Hdt.3.142, 3) (Meier 1980, 117).

¹¹⁵ “Die überkommenen Formen der Adelherrschaft hatten versagt. Die Tyrannis vermochte maßgebliche Teile des Griechentums – mindestens auf die Dauer – nicht zu überzeugen” (Meier 1980, 118).

such powerful institutions as the old phylai in which to act, isonomia was impossible. The old phylai had to be replaced (Meier 1980, 123). But the incorporation of the demos in politics not only necessitated new political institutions, the concerns of the citizens had to become part of politics as well (ibid. 126-7). The reforms were necessary to ensure the political presence of the citizens in opposition to the aristocracy; in answer to the foregoing crisis in the 6th century (ibid. 129).

The reforms of Kleisthenes were final steps in shaping and consolidating an Athenian political identity. They realised and institutionalised processes well under way. After 508/7, the Athenian success in the Persian Wars further encouraged democracy, as each citizen felt he had a stake in the city he had contributed to defend (cf. Hdt. 5.78). The aim of the reforms was to make civic political presence possible, making the demos identify themselves with the polis and its constitution (Meier 1980, 141-2).

Meier's analysis demonstrates the importance of long-term developments for Athenian democracy, and uses them as background for Kleisthenes' strategy for securing the influence of the masses. It is still unclear why Kleisthenes became the champion of the people, however. In contrast to the 5th century, the people were presumably not yet a force to be reckoned with. Meier counters this argument by arguing that the people demanded isonomia; they were not offered a reform, they demanded action and were both willing and able to see it done. The experiences of colonisation on the one hand, and tyranny on the other prompted a demand for constitutional change. The reforms were enacted to secure this change. In this way, Meier reconciles the views of both Herodotos and Aristotle, by making the revolt of the Athenians a prerequisite for the reforms of Kleisthenes. Kleisthenes' reforms were not the cause of democracy; they made isonomia work, in a way, they perpetuated the revolt of the citizens.

This explanation seemingly exhausts all available sources, and gives a coherent picture of the development of Athenian democracy. Meier's analysis has a tendency to present Kleisthenes as a man sent by fate; it may seem like the democratic developments throughout Greek history depended on a leader to be realised in a constitution.

It would have been interesting, however, to examine further exactly which colonial experiences had promoted the demand for isonomia. Were they simply a realisation of the existence of alternatives, among other Greek poleis? Were the Athenians inspired by concrete institutions or polities?

These questions may add further nuances to the history of democracy. The present thesis does not intend to prove that Athenian democracy was not Greek, or may not have

developed from indigenous institutions and circumstances. It is rather the point of this examination to demonstrate possible foreign influences on these developments, and challenge the view that democracy was an isolated phenomenon.

Denis Roussel (1976) argues that the four phylai of Athens were neither tribal groups incorporated into the polis, nor did they correspond to geographical areas, nor did they represent original occupational classes (Roussel 1976, 194-8). By the time of Kleisthenes, the four phylai were outside the political organisation of Athens; they had no political consequence, and were not political institutions. They were cultic bodies (ibid. 203-4). The four phylai, named after the sons of Ion, were an expression of civic unity; the Athenians were one, big family (ibid. 270). But these institutions were nothing through which to reform Athenian society. Kleisthenes' introduction of the ten new phylai was an innovative political measure: Old subdivisions of the polis were appointed new or different roles, and new institutions were introduced (ibid. 269).

Roussel emphasises the innovative genius of Kleisthenes, and strives to demonstrate how he acted against all precedence in transforming Athens. He was a political strategist; the reforms were brought through against tradition and in opposition to his enemies among the elite. They strengthened his own political position and that of his faction. This heroising view of Kleisthenes perhaps understates the political climate in Athens at the time; not only Kleisthenes was interested in political change. On the other hand, the wide-ranging effect of the reforms are remarkable; the constitution was thoroughly transformed, and the reforms put an end to civil strife.

Mogens Herman Hansen (1991; 1993) argues that the purpose of several of the reforms of Kleisthenes was to secure the new democracy from external and internal enemies (Hansen 1991, 35). He attributes the deme-reform of Kleisthenes, in part at least, to an army reform: Each of the ten *phylai* contributed with a regiment of hoplites and a cavalry unit (Hansen 1991, 34; 1993, 119). A further prophylactic reform was the introduction of ostracism; potential political leaders could be banished, to obviate future stasis (Hansen 1991, 35). Hansen does admit that Kleisthenes sought to break up the old social structures and create new political entities by the assignment of demes to phylai and trittys (Hansen 1991, 48). But his analysis of the driving force behind political changes towards democracy hinges on the military developments: As a result of the Athenian naval expansion and the growing importance of the fleet, the *thētes*, the poor citizens, could demand political power through their service as rowers. This shifted the balance of power away from the middle class hoplites

(Hansen 1991, 36-7). The broadening of the basis for political participation is read as an effect of military developments.

The attribution of the reformation of the demes to an army reform seems an unnecessary reduction, and fits neither the evidence from Herodotos nor Aristotle. The redivision of Attica must have been primarily a cultic and political reform: The problem of strife between aristocratic factions persisted as long as the substantial land-owners controlled their neighbouring peasants politically through client-bonds and the cultic bodies. It was these power-bases the reforms addressed and were aimed to abolish, not to establish an army to defend what was as yet only in the making, i.e. democracy.

Jochen Bleicken (1995) emphasises the role played by Kleisthenes as instigator of the new order. Solon played no important role in the development of democratic institutions as such. The attribution of political changes to one man is a commonplace in Ancient Greek historiography. Democracy was a result of complex changes in the political and social conditions. These prerequisites were peculiar for Athenian history and society, so that democratic thinking might only have originated there (Bleicken 1995, 19-20).

The city of Athens was the centre of religious and social life, not the seats of the individual aristocratic families. The three Solonic property-classes were mobilized into an army of hoplites, harmonising the new political awareness with the military tactics of the time, the phalanx (Bleicken 1995, 41-2). But the masses needed a spokesman in order to formulate a political strategy, and this man was Kleisthenes.¹¹⁶ His reforms were not only an attempt to strengthen the hoplites politically; his program was also part of the rivalry within the nobility itself. *Isonomia* was a consequence of the reforms, and not their explicit goal (ibid. 42-3).

The Kleisthenic reforms of the *dēmes*, *phylai* and *trittys* were effective in abolishing all *Lokalgeist*. The *phylē* was not meant to form a geographical unit and the political bonds between the nobility and the populace were sundered through the new local divisions. The power of the nobles was broken, and the phalanx and political organisation emphasised the egalitarianism of the people (Bleicken 1995, 43-5). Soon, the story circulated that the ground for democracy was prepared by the tyrant-slayers Harmodios and Aristogeiton (ibid. 46). Ostracism was introduced as a measure of protection against the more articulate members of the elite, to prevent the emergence of a new tyrant (ibid. 47).

¹¹⁶ “Die Maße wurde jetzt zwar mündig, aber sie hatte noch keinen Mund, durch den sie ihren Willen kundtun konnte; sie brauchte den adligen Sprecher [i.e. Kleisthenes]” (Bleicken 1995, 42).

Bleicken's summary account of the developments leading to democracy in Athens demonstrates the complex relationship between elite rivalry and popular demand for power. The Athenians who revolted against Isagoras and the Spartans were not necessarily only hoplites, however, so that the reforms of Kleisthenes need not have been aimed at securing political influence for the hoplites. Admittedly, this interpretation strengthens the continuity between Solon and Kleisthenes, i.e. that those who were freed from debt-bondage by Solon were now granted political participation by Kleisthenes. But exactly this harmonising of the reforms may be an unwarranted rationalisation of events in light of later developments.

Kleisthenes as the opportunist aristocrat who answers to the needs of the masses to formulate a political strategy follows the account of Aristotle. Bleicken's analysis of the effect of the reforms also follows Aristotle; to mix up the citizens and sever old bonds. The suddenness of this change is reminiscent of the revolution-hypothesis of Ober discussed above, and the importance of the long-term developments has been argued by several scholars. It is, however, worth questioning whether democratic thinking might only have originated in Athens. The long-term developments outlined above took place in several poleis. Conflicts between masses and the elite are evident from Hesiod and Homer. Some of the institutions peculiar to Kleisthenian democracy may be found in other polities normally regarded as quite different from Athens. I argue that these instances might temper the view that Athenian democracy was something completely new and peculiar to developments in the Greek polis of the 7th and 6th century. There are elements from other polities which point towards a democratic city-state.

7.2.4 Kleisthenes, Delphi and the divine control of territory

Central to Kleisthenes' reform of the demes is the introduction of the eponymous Heroes. They were ten in number, chosen by the Oracle at Delphi from a roster of hundred, and thereafter serving as the fictive ancestral founder of each of the ten phylai. The eponymous Heroes reveal a religious aspect to the reforms of Kleisthenes, which are otherwise normally analysed as a purely political measure. First of all, the sanction of the whole undertaking by the oracle at Delphi, and her appointment of the ten heroes from a list of a hundred candidates demonstrates how the supernatural suffused Greek politics, and how politics were an aspect of religious, cultic practices. The introduction of an eponymous hero or animal creates a fictive common ancestor, and thus a fictive kinship, between the members of the phyle. At the same

time, it transfers the ownership of the land to a divine entity and places the members of the phyle under its protection.¹¹⁷

Further, the demes belonging to each phyle becomes quasi the *temenos* of the hero, i.e. his sacred precinct; normally a piece of land marked off from common use and dedicated to a divinity, but also the landed property of a god. This has a possible parallel in the Reforms of Uru'inimginak, the last ruler of the Lagaš Dynasty (ca. 2380), whose land reform aimed at returning land which was no longer controlled by the temples to the righteous owners, the gods. The fields belonging to the temples are said to be restored to the ownership of the individual gods in their temples (Ukg.4.9.12-25; Ukg.5.20-31). In the same way, the Athenian phylai are placed under new eponymous heroes. The notion of divine precedence over a specific area and its inhabitants within the boundaries of a city-state seems to have been held in common by Greeks and Sumerians.

The *temenos*, or sacred precinct, is an institution encountered both in Greece and Mesopotamia, and is evident from both temple architecture and literary evidence. Admittedly, the *trittys* of the demes assigned to the eponymous heroes are not usually treated as *temena*. But Kleisthenes' reform of the demes was a territorial reform, by all probability intended to break the wealthy landowners' political dominance over the local farmers. The outward form of this reform was to redistribute the territories and put them under the divine protection of heroes.

Uru'inimginak seized the control of estates and landed property, which had been usurped by private landowners, and placed it in the hands of the god to whom it rightfully belonged. Similarly, Kleisthenes took the demes of Attica, which were dominated by wealthy landowners and faction interests, and placed them under the eponymous heroes of the ten new phylai.

In Mesopotamia, the gods were the rulers of the city-state, and the agricultural land of the city belonged to them. To give back control of fields to the gods, taking it away from private owners, meant a restatement of the unity of arable land and city-state under the rule of the gods. In the reforms of Uru'inimginak, the problem addressed was not the ownership of land as such, but the right to agricultural exploitation of it, and revenue from the produce.

¹¹⁷ Even though animal totemism is unattested in Ancient Greece, many Greek gods have animal attributes, and appear in animal form. Sacrifice to animals in Mycenaean times is attested from the Theban tablets, and in Classical times, depictions of adorants sacrificing to Zeus in the form of a snake are common. It seems therefore not unreasonable to interpret the attributing of animal names to the Sikyonian phylai (cf. Hdt. 5.67-8) as an act of putting the phylai under some divine protection rather than as a deliberate taunting. It might be argued that asses or pigs are untypical totemic animals, but sacred domestic animals, such as the cow (cf. Io), the goat (cf.

The eponymous heroes represent the collective unity of the polis, and the placement of the trittyes of the demes under their guardianship meant to restate the unity of the polis: The inhabitants were united in phylai under divine heroes, rather than rallied under the leadership of influential land-owners. The reforms of Kleisthenes did not concern a redivision of territory as such, but a redivision of the communities of people living on that territory.

The similarity between these reforms lie in the installation of divinities as the highest authority over units of cultivated or inhabited land in the city-state. The city-state is placed under divine administration through a reform.

As far as this comparison holds, it chiefly serves as a reminder that the reforms of Kleisthenes need not be understood exclusively as a rational, political measure, the way Aristotle presents it in the *Athenaion Politeia*. Kleisthenes may have had more in common with pre-democratic reformers like Solon, and Mesopotamian reformers, whose reforms are couched in a religious language, than with revolutionary leaders.

7.3 The Persian Wars, Athenian sea-power and elite dominance

7.3.1 The sources

How was the political situation in Athens after the reforms of Kleisthenes? The period in question spans the time after 508/7, with the Battle of Marathon in 490/89, and the naval battle at Salamis in 480 and the land battle at Plataiai in 479 as the main events in the Persian Wars to boost Athenian popular self-esteem, to the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1. Most sources on the subject are quite late. Herodotos may be of some use, but does not really discuss the events of this period. Thukydides gives a summary account of Athenian developments leading up to the Peloponnesian War, but his focus is on armament and escalating conflict between Athens and Sparta. Aischylos is an indirect source to political developments, and he is chronologically an eyewitness. Aristotle presumably built his account of the period on Attidographers, and may therefore be deemed quite trustworthy. Isokrates gives information on the Areopagos Council, but he used historical accounts to achieve a rhetorical effect, and is at best a source to mentalities and popular memory, and not to historical circumstances. Plutarchos probably based most of his accounts of Athenian politicians on ancient sources, but he was quite far removed in time from the events described, and the additional details in these accounts must therefore be treated with caution.

Amaltheia) and the cock (cf. the cult of the Dioskuri), are well attested. Piglets were sacrificed in the Eleusinian mysteries. In Egyptian religion, even rodents and fish were sacred animals, with their own cults.

According to Thukydides, Themistokles was the strategist behind Athenian naval policy prior to the Peloponnesian war, including the building of the long walls down to Peiraieus (Thuc. 1.90-3). The Athenians took over the leadership of the Delian League from the Spartans, and collected revenues (*phoros*) from its members (Thuc. 1.96). Soon, the Athenians dominated their allies, and forced those who were unwilling to contribute either ships or money. They increased their control over the other membership states through their navy, which was paid for by the revenues (Thuc. 1.99).

Aristotle and Plutarchos emphasise the conflict between democratic and aristocratic leaders in the time after the Persian Wars. The leaders of the people attained their prominence in the city in part because of their effort as military leaders.¹¹⁸ With reference to these sources, the Athenian constitution after Kleisthenes is held to be less democratic than after the reform of Ephialtes. There is, however, some evidence from Aischylos to deny that the “moderate democracy” of Kleisthenes significantly differed from the “radical democracy” after Ephialtes (cf. Ringvej 2003).

According to the *Athenaion Politeia*, further reforms after Kleisthenes included a new system for electing generals, and for appointing archons: After 501/0, ten strategoi were appointed, one from each phyle; the polemarch was supreme commander (*Ath. Pol.* 22. 2).¹¹⁹ Since 487/6, the nine archons were appointed by lot based on the phylai, from a list of five hundred elected by the demotes, instead of being elected directly (*Ath. Pol.* 22.5). This may have weakened the authority of the Areopagos Council, since its members no longer consisted of those the community had regarded as their most able men. Election by lot equalled the chances of all candidates, and made corruption through bribes difficult. Those who became archons no longer represented those with the greatest support among voters. The generals were elected, however, presumably because the Athenians regarded political skill to be relatively equal among its citizens, whereas only a few men could make good generals.

There had been a gradual development and increase in the city and in the democracy (*proēlthen hē polis, hama tēi dēmokratiai kata mikron auxanomenē*) up to and after the reforms of Kleisthenes. After the Persian wars, however, the Areopagos Council recovered its strength and administered the city (*diōikei tēn polin*). Its predominance was due to the battle of Salamis, because the Areopagos had provided money and enabled the men to embark on ships, whereas the generals had been unable to handle the crisis (*Ath. Pol.* 23.1). Because of

¹¹⁸ Themistokles was the man behind the Athenian naval policy (Plut. *Them.* 4), whereas Aristeides was the architect of the Delian league (Plut. *Ari.* 21 and 24-25).

this, the citizens submitted to the authority of the Areopagos, and were well governed (*dia tautēn dē tēn aitian parechōroun autēs tōi axiōmati, kai epoliteuthēsan Athēnaioi kalōs*). Athens acquired leadership at sea despite the opposition of the Spartans (*Ath. Pol.* 23.2). The champions of the people were Aristeides and Themistokles (*Ath. Pol.* 23.3).

Plutarchos adds further details, but presents Aristeides and Themistokles as opposites, rather than fellow champions of the people.¹²⁰ From his *Parallel Lives*, there seems to have been several factors which promoted democratic change in the period between the reforms. Factions within the elite fought for political influence at the time, and took advantage of public dissatisfaction to gain followers.¹²¹ Social and economic changes in the wake of the wars sharpened conflicts between the elite and the masses. First of all, the armament program of Athens and the building of a navy opened for embezzlement and increased riches for men in leading positions (*Plut. Ari.* 4). This may have increased public demand for democratic rule, against aristocratic dominance. The evacuation of the countryside increased the city population in Athens (cf. *Ath. Pol.* 24.1-2). The ravaging of Attica and the destruction of Athens led to increased citizen solidarity amongst the Athenians and in opposition to their luckier allies, especially the Spartans (cf. *Plut. Them.* 9). Athens was able to establish a naval empire thanks to the establishment of the Delian League in 478/7, and this radically changed the financial situation of the city. The revenues made public sponsorship of cultural and political activities possible, especially the payment for attending the Assembly, which was introduced later by Perikles.

There are some indications that the Athenian constitution after Kleisthenes was as radical as it allegedly became after Ephialtes. A definition of the Athenian radical democracy is given by Herodotos, in the “Persian” constitutional debate. The advocate of democracy says

¹¹⁹ Some would also have the liturgical system introduced at this time, although the *Athenaion Politeia* is not explicit concerning this.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Plut. Ari.* 3. Aristeides is described as a leader of the aristocratic faction. But Plutarchos says further on in the biography that Aristeides was attentive to popular demand for a more democratic constitution in Athens after the battle at Plataiai. It was felt that the demos had earned more attention paid to it for its courage in the wars. Besides, the demos was now skilled in warfare and emboldened by their recent victories. Aristeides therefore allegedly wrote a proposal (*psēphisma*) that the constitution should be in common (*koinēn einai tēn politeian*) and that every Athenian be granted eligibility for the archonship (*Plut. Ari.* 22). It is difficult to determine whether this is true or not. Concerning the naval program of Themistokles, this supposedly made the Athenian constitution more democratic, although Plutarchos refuses to comment further on this (*Plut. Them.* 4). The connection of Peiraieus with Athens at any rate heightened the self-confidence of the sailors and those who did not own landed property (*Plut. Them.* 19).

¹²¹ The political boundaries ran predominantly between the rich and the poor, but there are indications that the situation might have been more complex: Plutarchos, in his biography on Aristeides, relates that before the battle of Plataiai (479), some Athenian aristocrats who had become impoverished by the Persian Wars wanted to overthrow the democracy (*katalysein ton dēmon*), because their influence and standing in the city had vanished with their wealth (*Plut. Ari.* 13). This may point to conflicts within the traditional elite, in face of the changing economic situation in Athens.

that the rule by the multitude (*to plēthos*) has the most beautiful name; *isonomia*. Offices are determined by lot, the magistrates are liable to give account for the administration of their offices, and all deliberation is carried out in the midst of the community (*palōi men archas archei, hypeuthynon de archēn echei, bouleumata de panta es to koinon anapherei*) (Hdt.3.80.6). According to Mona Ringvej (2003), these features are already prominent in Athenian political culture before the reforms of Ephialtes, indicating that the Athenian constitution after the reforms of Kleisthenes was a radical democracy (Ringvej 2003, 263). This hypothesis is based on analyses of three plays by Aischylos: *The Persians* (472), *Seven Against Thebes* (467), and *Suppliants* (463)¹²² (Ringvej 2003, 192-262).

There are indeed instances in these early plays of Aischylos, which might be evidence for a democratic constitution in Athens in the first half of the 5th century BCE. The Athenians prided themselves in being independent and free, and in fighting together in massed ranks. In the radical democracy (after 462/1), public examination of officials after the end of their term of office (*euthūna*) was an important principle.

In Aischylos' *Persians* from 472, the Athenians are described by Persian veterans from Marathon to the Persian queen: Their main characteristics are that they are fighting with spear and shield, standing in close array (Aesch. *Pers.* 240). They are the slaves of no one, and are subjects to no man (Aesch. *Pers.* 242). The ghost of Dareios explains Xerxes' defeat at Salamis as a punishment for hybris: Zeus is standing by, the punisher of too arrogant thoughts; he is the strict judge (*euthynos barys*) (Aesch. *Pers.* 821-31).

Selection of officials by lot was an important device to secure an equal chance for all candidates in obtaining an office, and to prevent professionalism in the bureaucracy. In Aischylos' *Seven Against Thebes* from 467, the seven heroes of the hostile army cast lots; a lot cast out of a shaken helmet appoints a responsibility to each of them; to which of the respective gates each should lead his troops (*klēroumenos d'eleipon, hōs palōi lachōn hekastos autōn pros pylas agoi lochon*) (Aesch. *Hepta.* 54-6).

Public deliberation is perhaps the most important element in any direct democracy. In Athens, this took place in the Assembly, where all citizens had the right to participate in political deliberation (*isegoria*). In Aischylos' *Suppliants*, the decisions of the public are law. King Pelasgos of the Argives tells the suppliant women that the people (*laos*) are the body-politic (*to koinon*). He may not decree any engagement without all citizens consulting on it together (*egō d'an ou krainoim' hyposchesin paros, astois de pāsi tōnde koinōsas peri*)

¹²² The dates are taken from Denys Page's 1972 edition of *Aeschyli Tragoediae*

(Aesch. *Hiket.* 365-9). The king advises the suppliants to put their branches symbolising their status as fugitives on the altars, as proof for all the citizens (*pantes politai*). Thus none will let fall a word against him (*aporriphthēi logos*), as the people are fond of finding fault with authority (*archēs gar philaitios leōs*) (Aesch. *Hiket.* 481-5). Later on, the citizens are assembled. Danaos tells his suppliant daughters to take courage; it [their case] has seemed good to the country's inhabitants, the citizens, with whom full authority is placed (*eu ta tōn egchōriōn dēmou dedoktai pantelē psēphismata*). The suppliants are eager to know the decision, to which the ruling demos' hands gave majority (*dēmou kratoūsa cheir hopēi plēthynetai*) (Aesch. *Hiket.* 600-4). Danaos relates how the Argives unambiguously ratified king Pelasgos' proposal of granting the suppliants asylum and right of settlement, through voting in the assembly (Aesch. *Hiket.* 605-24). When the Egyptians arrive and contest the decision, king Pelasgos states that the decision of the demos may not be violated. It is not engraved on tablets, nor written in books, but clearly to be heard from the tongue of a free-spoken man (Aesch. *Hiket.* 942-9).

7.3.2 Democratisation or elite dominance?

The sources agree that increased population in the city promoted democratisation. The victories against the Persians, and the increased importance of the Athenian navy, also stimulated developments towards democracy. Finally, the increased revenues to the state weakened the political influence of elite families, and made it possible for more Athenians to participate in politics. Aristotle says that Athens was dominated by the Areopagos, but is silent on whether the Areopagos Council was dominated by an elite. Since he views this as better than later developments, it presumably indicates that he regarded the Athenian constitution as less democratic in this period than later. In Plutarchos, there is an emphasis on party-politics and leading figures from the elite, which may be a product of his biographical angle, and probably a result of a view of history concentrating on the lives and deeds of Great Men. Both Aristotle and Plutarchos support the view that Athenian democracy was less radical after Kleisthenes than after Ephialtes.

This may conflict with evidence from Athenian tragedy, although several interpretations are possible: The evidence for *euthyna* in the *Persians* is slight, and is not much to base a firm conclusion on. It may also be a reference to a general principle, and not an instituted political practice. The same goes for the evidence for appointing officials by lot in the *Seven against Thebes*. The lot is not used to select officials, and there is no explanation

why the warriors are selected by lot. The best evidence for a working democracy before the reforms of Ephialtes remains the *Suppliants*. The three basic elements of the “radical democracy”, as defined by Herodotos, may be argued to have been part of the Athenian constitution after the reforms of Kleisthenes. But there are few indications in the plays of Aischylos for how these elements worked. On the other hand, the appointment of officials by lot is a practice known from other polities as well, and the mention of it in the *Seven against Thebes* is hardly coincidental. The use of the lot has religious connotations, since a decision thereby is reached by forces outside human agency. There is small reason, however, for arguing that the use of the lot in the play reflects a measure to counter professionalism in the governing institutions, as it was in Athens.

There is some comparative evidence for political use of the lot in Ancient Near Eastern polities (cf. Oppenheim 1964 [1977], 208-9). There is also good evidence for deliberative assemblies, whose decisions have authority over the king, like in *Bilgameš and Akka* (in Sumerian city-states) or *The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia* (in Levantine city-states). This evidence may indicate that Athenian radical democracy in some respects resembled polities in the Ancient Near East. This may contest the claim that Athenian democracy was a unique, unprecedented invention of Greek genius, and even indicate that Athenian democracy owed its final form to elements and traditions beyond the world of the Greek polis. On these grounds, it may be argued that Athenian democracy took shape influenced by a political environment including the Ancient Near Eastern polities and their constitutional history.

7.3.3 Interpretations of the period between the reforms

According to Felix Jacoby (1949), there were defined “parties” in Athens between 510 and 462/1, i.e. between the expulsion of the tyrants and the reforms of Ephialtes: The reactionaries represented by Isagoras and the Gephyraioi seem to stand against Kleisthenes (Jacoby 1949, 340 n. 53). Jacoby argues that Herodotos’ informants belonged to the circle round Perikles or Perikles himself: Herodotos does not mention Ephialtes and the crisis of the sixties, where Perikles was an adjutant to the leading politician (ibid. 161) (cf. Hdt.6.121-31; 6.123).

According to Jochen Bleicken (1995), the politics of the 490’s and 480’s were characterised by the struggle for the archonship, whereas the building up of a navy dominated foreign politics. The new fleet was paid for partly by the silver mines in Laurion and partly by private *triērarches*. Its importance for the political development of Athens lay in its need for

rowers (Bleicken 1995, 48-9). The rowers were predominantly recruited from the *thētes*, the Athenian citizens *infra classem* (ibid. 50).

Mona Ringvej (2003) argues that the interpretation of the Kleisthenian democracy as “moderate”¹²³ has no secure basis in the sources. She questions whether the elite ruled Athens through the Areopagos between the reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes. Ringvej’s main point is that the Herodotean definition of *isonomia*, i.e. democracy, may be used to describe Athenian society after the Kleisthenian reforms, before 462/1 (Ringvej 2003, 263).

Herodotos’ account of *isonomia* is an early definition of radical democracy, after the reforms of Ephialtes (Ringvej 2003 145-6). Ringvej finds that this definition also holds for the society mirrored in the tragedies of Aischylos, including those written before 462/1: In the *Persians*, accountability (*euthūna*) plays a significant role in the description of Athenian politics (ibid. 216-7). The lot is important for reaching decisions in the *Seven against Thebes* (ibid. 237). In the *Suppliants*, democracy is seen in action as decisions are taken in common by the assembly of the people (ibid. 261). This should indicate that the Kleisthenian democracy was not “moderate”, as indicated by the *Athenaion Politeia*; that the oligarchy had succeeded in regaining power in Athens through the Areopagos. Rather, democracy was introduced through a common political decision in 508/7; the elite gave in to, or were forced to comply with, the will of the *demos* (Ringvej 2003, 273).

Jacoby and Bleicken follow Aristotle and Plutarchos, whereas Ringvej argues from Aischylos. It is difficult to determine why Aristotle should claim that the Areopagos dominated Athens before Ephialtes. The presentation in the *Athenaion Politeia* may have been influenced by the polemic topos of “the good, old constitution”, which is found in orators of the 4th century. Mogens Herman Hansen argues that since the archons were selected from a pre-elected list by 487/6, the Areopagos Council became a random cross-section of the upper class, and lost political significance (Hansen 1991, 37). This may strengthen the claim that Athenian democracy was not altered much by the reforms of Ephialtes. Ringvej’s argument that political practice after 508/7 was similar to the state of affairs after 462/1 may be right, but difficult to prove, since the sources are in conflict. The main event in the history of Athenian democracy remains the reforms of Kleisthenes, and the sources are careful to present the reform of Ephialtes as a continuation of the Kleisthenic reforms.

¹²³ With specific reference to Kurt Raaflaub, who asserts that the reforms of Kleisthenes promoted *isonomia*, rather than *demokratia*. Raaflaub defines *isonomia* as equality among peers, and this had yet nothing to do with any thought of democracy (quoted in Ringvej 2003, 18).

7.4 The Areopagos and Ephialtes

7.4.1 The sources

Many scholars hold the Council of the Areopagos to have formed the main instrument of power for the elite against democratic measures. It was a council in which all those who had served as archons were lifetime members. The archons were chosen by lot annually from the higher property classes, and the areopagites thus functioned as a conservative check on the decisions of the demos. It lost this privilege in 462/1, however, and from then on its responsibilities were mainly cultic. Later conservative writers, like Isokrates, viewed the Areopagos Council as a tempering voice of reason, which had granted excellence to Athens before the time of empire. According to this view, the constitutions of Solon and Kleisthenes were superior to the radical democracy after Ephialtes precisely for the powers (*epitheta*) invested in the Areopagos Council in these periods.

The Areopagos Council consisted of all who had previously served as archons. The first and most important of these officials were the *basileus*, the *polemarch* and the *Archon* (*Ath. Pol.* 3.2). These shared the powers of the hereditary king. According to the *Athenaion Politeia*, the office of *basileus* was the oldest, and was that of the traditional ruler. To this was added the *polemarch*, who was the war-leader (*Ath. Pol.* 3.2). The last office to be created was the *Archon*, and it later became the principal office of the state (*Ath. Pol.* 3.3). By the late 7th century, the archons were nine; six *thesmothetai* (and their secretary, added by Kleisthenes), the *Archon*, the *basileus*, and the *polemarch*.¹²⁴ They were appointed by lot from each tribe in turn (*Ath. Pol.* 55.1). Before they could enter office, they underwent a thorough investigation regarding their background and conduct (*Ath. Pol.* 55.2-5). The first *Archon* was eponymous, i.e. he gave his name to the current year in Athens. Therefore, most ancient Athenian dates are given as “in the archonship of so-and-so”. In the *Athenaion Politeia*, however, the eponymous *Archon* is only referred to as the *Archon*.

The Areopagos lost much of its power through the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1. According to the *Athenaion Politeia*, the Areopagos was dominant in the constitution for seventeen years after the Persian Wars, but gradually declined. The masses (*to plēthos*)

¹²⁴ The responsibilities of the *Archon* were among others to appoint choreges for the tragedies, and to challenge claims to exemption for various reasons (*Ath. Pol.* 56.3). The *Archon* also took care of lawsuits concerning domestic justice (*Ath. Pol.* 56.6). The *basileus* was responsible for the Mysteries, together with the overseers. In addition to this, he was in charge of some other processions and all the traditional sacrifices (*Ath. Pol.* 57.1). Disputes on religious matters and private suits for homicide fell to him (*Ath. Pol.* 57.2-4). The *polemarch* administered certain sacrifices, organised the funeral games for the war-dead, and performed rites to Harmodios and Aristogeiton (*Ath. Pol.* 58.1.). The *thesmothetai* dealt with legal matters, such as the public suits for illegal

increased, and Ephialtes became champion of the people (*ho dēmos*). He appeared incorrupt and just regarding the constitution, and attacked the Areopagos Council (*Ath. Pol.* 25.1). First, he eliminated many of the areopagites by bringing them on trial for misconduct in offices. Then, in the archonship of Konon (462/1), he took away all the acquired powers (*ta epitheta*) by which the Areopagos Council guarded the constitution, giving some to the Council of Five Hundred, some to the demos and some to the jury-courts (*Ath. Pol.* 25.2).¹²⁵ Everyone wondered at what had happened. Afterwards, Themistokles and Ephialtes attacked the Areopagos Council in the Council of Five Hundred and in the Assembly, until all its powers had been taken away. Not much later, Ephialtes was assassinated by Aristodikos of Tanagra (*Ath. Pol.* 25.4).

In the *Areopagitikos*, Isokrates urges the Athenians to return to the democracy (*hē dēmokratia*) of Solon and Kleisthenes (*Isoc. Areo.* 16). At that time, the common interest was not a business, but regarded as a public service (*ou gar emporian alla leitourgian enomizon einai tēn tōn koinōn epimeleian*) (*Isoc. Areo.* 25). The Areopagos Council guarded the public order (*eukosmia*), and membership was restricted to those who belonged to good families and gave evidence of particular virtue and moderation in life (*tois kalōs gegonosī kai pollēn aretēn en tōi biōi kai sōphrosynēn endedeigmenois*). It took precedence over the other councils in Greece (*Isoc. Areo.* 37). The Areopagos saw to it that Athens was not filled with lawsuits, accusations, taxes, poverty, or wars (*hēs epistatousēs ou diokōn oud' egklēmatōn oud' eisphorōn oude penia oude polemōn hē polis egemen*), but secured peace and stability (*Isoc. Areo.* 51).¹²⁶

According to Plutarchos, Ephialtes acted on behalf of Perikles when he ended the power of the Areopagos Council (*Plut. Per.* 7).¹²⁷ In Plato's words, Ephialtes "poured the pure and undiluted freedom into the cups of the citizens" and according to a comedy writer, made the people unruly as a wild horse (both quotes in *Plut. Per.* 7). The people supported Perikles, and because of this Ephialtes succeeded in taking away most of the powers of the Areopagos Council (*Plut. Per.* 9). Ephialtes was the leader of the democratic faction, and was a terror to

proposals (*Ath. Pol.* 59.2). Another of their several responsibilities was to introduce the scrutinies for officials (*Ath. Pol.* 59. 4).

¹²⁵ Themistokles was co-responsible for these events; Aristotle claims that he supported Ephialtes in getting rid of the Areopagos Council, because he faced a trial for treason in the Areopagos Council (*Ath. Pol.* 25.3).

¹²⁶ Further, the Areopagos Council relieved the poor by providing work (*ergasia*) and benefits from the rich (*tōn echontōn ōpheleia*), and disciplined the young by giving them occupations and keeping watch over them. Those who sought office out of greed (*pleonexia*) were discouraged through the establishment of penalties (*timōriai*), and by not accepting that perpetrators were not brought to justice. The elderly were secured welfare by granting them public honours and making sure the young took care of them (*Isoc. Areo.* 55).

¹²⁷ Perikles was accused of having later rid himself of Ephialtes out of jealousy, but Plutarchos does not believe this (*Plut. Per.* 10).

the oligarchs because he relentlessly attacked those who abused the people. He brought them to justice before the courts. Ephialtes therefore had enemies who conspired against his life, and he was killed in secret by Aristodikos of Tanagra (Plut. *Per.* 10). Ephialtes was accused of wanting to abolish the Areopagos Council to win the support of the people, and he was in conflict with Kimon (Plut. *Cim.* 10).

Plutarchos claims that Kimon, when he served as *stratēgos*, was able to hold sway over the demos and detain them from attacking the elite (*hoi aristoi*) and taking power (*archē kai dynamis*), as long as he was present in Athens. But during one of his campaigns, the people (*hoi polloi*) felt unobstructed through his absence, and confounded the constitution. Under the leadership of Ephialtes they stripped the Areopagos of all judiciary powers except in certain, special cases. They made themselves masters of the judiciary courts, and thus plunged the city into absolute democracy (*akrata dēmokratia*) (Plut. *Cim.* 15).

The radical democracy of Athens was regarded unfavourably by members of the elite. A pamphlet called the *Athēnaiōn Politeia*, attributed to Xenophon the Orator (Ps.-Xenophon), sometimes called the Old Oligarch, is a polemical description of and implicit attack on Athenian democracy. Ps.-Xenophon describes the Athenian liturgy-system as exploitation of the rich by the multitude of the poor: The demos demands payment for singing, running, dancing, and sailing on the ships, so that they may enrich themselves and the rich get poorer (Ps.-Xenoph. *Ath. Pol.* I.13). Through them, the poor (*hoi penētai*) attain what they personally can't afford, through sponsorship by the elite (*hoi oligoi kai hoi eudaimones*) (ibid. II. 9-10). There were frequent appeals concerning liturgies, from citizens who claimed they were unrightfully required to perform them (ibid. III. 4). Throughout the pamphlet, the multitude of the poor (*ho ochlos*) are described as the masters of Athens, and the elite are at their command.

7.4.2 The end of elite dominance?

Aristotle presents Ephialtes as a champion of the people, who wanted to put an end to misconduct in the Areopagos Council. It may seem like he, for all his good intentions, was somehow duped by Themistokles into making away with the power of the Areopagos Council altogether. But as he was a champion of the people, it seems reasonable that he intended to give power to the Assembly, Council of Five Hundred and the People's Court, at the expense of the Areopagos Council.

Isokrates' claim that everything was better under the Areopagos Council is polemical, and provides little new evidence for its position in the constitution prior to Ephialtes. It seems unreasonable that Athens knew no poverty, taxes or wars before Ephialtes. Radical democracy must at any rate have given opportunity for participation in politics to those without substantial means, as evident from the accusation against people being involved in politics for the sake of making money.

Plutarchos is probably wrong when he claims that Ephialtes acted on behalf of Perikles, and this demonstrates how Plutarchos is influenced by later events in his interpretation of elder Athenian history. Ephialtes was after all the leader of the democratic faction, not Perikles. Plutarchos presents him as an enemy of Kimon, and indirectly accuses Ephialtes of bringing about the reforms to get at his enemy, and obtain the upper hand by winning the support of the people. In Plutarchos' view, Kimon was in opposition to the Athenian poor, and was against the reforms. Kimon attempted, however, to obtain the support of the demos himself, by distributing his private wealth to the needy (cf Plut. *Cim.* 10).

The Old Oligarch demonstrates the state of affairs after Ephialtes, but his generalisations of the greed and laziness of the poor could have been written by a conservative in any society. It says little about the state of affairs before Ephialtes.

From these different sources it seems like the Athenian masses were indeed given power through the reform of Ephialtes. The reform aimed at transferring power to the people, but the Areopagos seems to have been weakened already by the time of the reform, and misconduct of magistrates seems to have been widespread. It is therefore unlikely that Ephialtes ended elite dominance, as such, since their hold on Athenian politics was already weakened.

7.4.3 Interpretations of Ephialtes

Regarding the reforms of Ephialtes, Josiah Ober (1989) maintains that the Areopagos lost some of its legal powers, including the authority to review and set aside as "unconstitutional" decisions of the Assembly (Ober 1989, 77). Ober states that "the elite no longer had an institutional means to veto the decisions of the masses" (ibid. 78). The agenda-setting function of the Council of Five hundred became more important. *Isēgoria*, the right of all citizens to speak on matters of state importance in the Assembly, was introduced within a few years after 462 (ibid). The magistracies and the Council offered little for elite members seeking prominence. The Assembly became an arena for competitions in rhetoric, and for seeking fame through the adoption and advocating of popular causes. Therefore, greater freedom of

political debate seemed a good idea. In addition to this, the property qualifications for holding office were lowered, and pay for government service was introduced shortly after 462 (ibid. 79). Elite members became demagogues to maintain their political influence (ibid. 85).

Jochen Bleicken (1995) sums up the consequences of the reforms: After the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1, the processes of *dokimasia*, i.e. the examination or scrutiny of officials after election, and *euthūna*, i.e. the public examination of the conduct of officials after their term of office was ended, were preceded over by the Assembly, Council and People's Court. Through this, the Areopagos Council lost all control over the supervision of office holders and court proceedings. The power of the magistrates was broken, the functions of the Areopagos taken over by the demos. The victory of Ephialtes over the faction of Kimon was helped by his being occupied elsewhere, together with 4000 hoplites (Bleicken 1995, 51-3).

Mogens Herman Hansen (1991) argues that radical democracy was in conflict with the constitution of Solon and Kleisthenes, which was dominated by the hoplite classes: In 462/1, a hoplite army led by Kimon was abroad to help the Spartans overcome a helot revolt. With the hoplites out of town, the poor citizens held the majority in the assembly. They ratified a proposal by Ephialtes to strip the Areopagos Council of its power, and invest it in the Assembly, the Council of Five Hundred and the People's Court (Hansen 1991, 37).

This interpretation of the events in 462/1 follows Plutarchos: The reform of Ephialtes was possible because Kimon was out of town. Bleicken and Hansen argue that the poor citizens and the middle class hoplites had conflicting interests.

Against the argument that the Reforms of Ephialtes represent a curbing of hoplite privileges in favour of the thetes, Victor D. Hanson emphasises the resistance of Attic hoplites to oligarchy in 411 and 403 (Hanson 1996, 302-4). Athenian democracy was a consequence of the 7th and 6th century agrarian timocracy. The potential for broadening the citizen basis in the early polis was realised in the reaction against tyranny under Kleisthenes (ibid. 304-5). The hoplite as ideal continued to be of political importance long after the military tactics of the agrarian community had been replaced by naval warfare and long-term campaigns (ibid. 307-8).

There seems to be little reason to doubt that the reform of Ephialtes meant the completion of the democratisation of Athenian political institutions. Whether this was a decisive change vis-à-vis the Kleisthenic constitution is difficult to assess, but there seems to be a unanimous view among critics of democracy at least, that Athenian democracy was more radical after the reform of Ephialtes: The fall of the Areopagos meant mob rule. The argument of Hanson, that the demos as a whole preferred democracy to oligarchy, speaks against the

view of the Old Oligarch that Athens was dominated by the poor. But the significance of the reform lies in the transfer of power to the institutions controlled by the demos. The increased importance of demagogues and rhetoric as a consequence of the reforms, as argued by Ober, seems reasonable. But rhetoric in the assembly and the council played an important role already in the Homeric epics: The assembly was an arena for seeking prominence by the 8th century at least; the vehicle of Greek politics was *logos*, the spoken word.

7.5 Institutions of Athenian radical democracy and Ancient Near Eastern polities

7.5.1 The liturgy

Rich citizens in Athens were required to perform liturgies, i.e. to serve public offices at one's own cost. These offices ranged from that of *chorēgos*, who defrayed the cost of producing a chorus (cf. Hdt. 5.83),¹²⁸ to that of *triērarchos*, who equipped a trireme for the public service (cf. Aristoph. *Acharneis*, 544-554; Thuc. 6.31). Some liturgies were local and administered by the individual phylai, others were administered by the Archon and other officials. Aristotle says that during a financial crisis in Athens, Hippias the tyrant offered those who were about to provide a trireme, to preside over a phyle, produce a choir, or perform some other liturgy (*triērarchein ē phylarchein ē chorēgein ē tina eis heteran leitourgian toiautēn ēmellon dapanān*); to pay a moderate sum in performing the service, and get their names inscribed among those who had performed it (Arist. *Oecon.* 1347a).

The liturgies were instituted in the laws, and it was considered an honour to perform them. Citizens who had performed liturgies usually commemorated their deeds in inscriptions. A choregos whose production won in the tragic contest at the Dionysiai had the right to erect a monument in the city.

The background for the Greek liturgies must be sought in developments of the 8th and 7th centuries. In the Archaic polis, there was increasing competition among the elite to outdo each other in generosity. At the same time, the polis increasingly demanded contributions from its members to finance ceremonies, festivals and warfare (Qviller [unpublished], 117). The pattern of displaying wealth changed, and led to the formation of the liturgy system (Qviller 1981, 142).¹²⁹ After the reforms of Solon, the *naukraries* were established, divisions of citizens responsible for income and expenditure. Each *naukraria* was presided over by a

¹²⁸ Aiginetan choregoi, but comparable to the Athenian institution.

¹²⁹ S. C. Humphreys (1978) dates the liturgy system to 502/1 in Athens: It regulated the distribution of the financial burdens associated with public, cultic spectacle and the corresponding political advantages (Humphreys 1978, 256-7).

naukraros (Ath. Pol. 8.3). According to Bjørn Qviller, the *naukraroi* were probably local groups of ship-owners who contributed ships to a navy in times of war. This would be evidence for early public organisation of contributions to the maintenance of the state in Athens (Qviller 1981, 142).

Anti-democratic writers were aware of the relationship between democracy and expensive liturgies performed by the rich, and viewed it as a kind of exploitation (Qviller [unpublished], 113). A candidate for a liturgy could object to performing a liturgy by claiming to have insufficient means, but was then required to offer to exchange his fortune with the one who took on the liturgy instead (*antidosis*) (cf. Ath. Pol. 56.3). The liturgies held taxes to a minimum, and ensured that the richest citizens paid for common activities. Thus, it served as a kind of redistributive device.

The liturgy system was presumably established as a political measure to control elite influence in the polis.¹³⁰ Since the liturgies were mandatory and performed on a rotation basis, the opportunities for lavish public spending to obtain clients were diminished. But spending more than necessary on a liturgy was likely to be noticed. There was a pressure on the rich in Athens to spend lavishly for the public benefit.

In the Akkadian story *Dialogue of Pessimism*, something resembling a liturgy is mentioned. The dialogue is an amusing piece of so called wisdom literature taking the form of a conversation between a master and his slave (text in *ANET*³, 600-601). The master proposes or declines various actions, and each time the slave agrees, and offers arguments *pro et contra* according to whether his master decides upon or rejects an idea. The master considers whether he should do a good deed for his country,¹³¹ and the slave encourages him by referring to how men who do good deeds for their country has his good deeds put on the ...¹³² of Marduk (IX.70ff). Then the master changes his mind, and the slave immediately replies that he should indeed not do a good deed for his country. The master should visit the ancient ruins, and inspect the skulls littered about: Nobody can tell which belonged to a good man and which to a bad one (IX.75ff).

¹³⁰ But Kimon used his wealth to obtain honour among the citizens: He removed the fences round his estates and orchards, so that anyone might help himself to the fruit. He also invited the poor to dine at his house, and had young men distribute clothes and money to the needy in the city (Plut. *Cim.* 10). Themistokles tried to win adherents and fame by drawing famous musicians to his house (Plut. *Them.* 5). Perikles won the people for his side by initiating public funding of theatre seats and other distributions of public wealth (Plut. *Per.* 9 and 11).

¹³¹ In W.G. Lambert's edition of the text (Lambert 1960, 139-49), the Akkadian term for doing a good term for one's country is *usatam ana mātišu epešum* (l. 72). In the *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, *usātu(m)* is "help" or "assistance" in general, and financial or commercial aid.

¹³² Lambert (1960) has *ina kippat (gi.gam.ma) ša^d marduk* (l.73), and translates it as "in the ring of Marduk". According to the *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, *kippatu(m)* means "circle, hoop, ring". The exact meaning here is obscure.

This resembles an Athenian liturgy; a citizen does a good deed for his country and commemorates it in an official inscription. There is even a special place reserved for such inscriptions, probably a part of an official building. The reason for doing a good deed for one's country is to obtain honour and a good reputation. This example admittedly does not really prove that there was a Mesopotamian liturgy-system instituted exactly like in Athens. It does demonstrate, however, that public services done or paid for by the rich existed in Mesopotamian cities. It was probably an instituted practice, since there was a specific place where such deeds were commemorated in inscriptions.

7.5.2 Eponymous officials, rotation and use of the lot in Athens and Assyria

In Athens, the eponymous Archon was selected by lot from the higher property-classes, and underwent strict scrutinies before he was allowed to enter office. He was the chief archon, and was called eponymous because he gave his name to the current year. This was standard practice by the 5th century. The Athenians claimed that the system went back to the archonship of one Kreon in 683 (Hansen 1991, 28). Athenian chronology is determined by the lists of Archons. In ancient sources, most Athenian events, or events described by Athenian historians, are dated by the eponymous Archon (and the Athenian calendar).

A similar institution existed in Assyria: Much of the Ancient Near Eastern chronology for the 1st millennium BCE is based on the Assyrian lists of Eponyms.¹³³ The Assyrians drew up lists of eponyms because they identified the years of a given reign by means of a continuous sequence of the names of high officials of the realm, who served as eponymous officials (Oppenheim 1964 [1977], 146). These lists were intended for practical purposes, for keeping track of events (ibid. 233).

Assyrian years were differentiated by the name of a high official who acted as eponym (*limmu*). The king acted as eponym on par with the highest administrative officers of the realm. Oppenheim argues that this might possibly have been a custom from a time when the king was only the *primus inter pares* of an amphictyonic league of sheikhs. The king of Assyria was the high priest of the god Aššur, and the Assyrian chieftains may have acted as priests or kings in a cultic centre, each for one year. The eponym, or ruler of the year, was, in theory at least, determined by lot (Oppenheim 1964 [1977], 99). Oppenheim argues that the official whose lot came up was regarded as chosen by the god to be his priest, or perform

¹³³ The completely preserved part of the Assyrian Eponymic Canon can be dated with precision down to 931, thanks to mention of a solar eclipse on 15th of June 763, in the eponymacy of Bursagale (von Soden 1985 [1992], 40).

some other priestly duty in connection with the New Year.¹³⁴ Later, the sequence of officials becoming eponyms was determined by rank and tradition rather than by lot (*ibid.* 100).

Selection of magistrates by lot was an important element in Athenian democracy. There is, however, disunity among scholars concerning when this practice began in Athens. Aristotle operates with a development in five stages.¹³⁵ In the “Drakonian constitution”, council-members and minor magistrates were selected by lot (*Ath. Pol.* 4.3). In the Solonian constitution, all magistrates were selected by lot from an elected short-list (*Ath. Pol.* 8.1). Up to the reform of 487/6, archons were elected; thereafter they were selected from an elected short-list (until 403) (*Ath. Pol.* 22.5). From 403 onwards, archons and other magistrates were selected by lot (*Ath. Pol.* 8.1; 55.1; 62.1) (Hansen 1991, 49-50).

In Greece, cleromancy, i.e. divination by throwing of lots, flourished in archaic, classical and Hellenistic times (Hansen 1991, 51). Many scholars argue that this was the background for a use of the lot to select magistracies in Solon’s time. Hansen argues that the evidence for a selection of magistracies by lot, so as to leave the decision to the gods, is late and ambiguous: There is no secure evidence for the view that the selection of magistrates by lot had a religious character or origin. Rather, use of the lot in Athens is specifically connected to radical democracy (*ibid.*). Therefore, Hansen maintains that Athenian magistrates were not selected by lot in the archaic age (*ibid.* 52).

Concerning the use of lots in Mesopotamia, the throwing of lots to determine the will of the gods had no cultic status. However, legal documents from the Old Babylonian period show that lots were used to assign the shares of estates to the sons. Later documents show that shares of temple income were originally distributed by lot to certain officials of the sanctuary. The lots, marked sticks of wood, were cast to establish a sequence among persons of equal status. This was also the case with the Assyrian custom of selecting the official who was to give his name to the New Year, by means of clay dice (Oppenheim 1964 [1977], 208-9).

The eponymous Archon of Athens has a parallel in the Neo-Assyrian eponymous officials. The two institutions differ, however, in that whereas the Athenians selected a new Archon by lot each year, the Assyrian eponymacy went to a new official every year, but in a cycle of offices. In Athens, the eponymous office remained, but the officer changed, whereas in Assyria, the eponymous office changed (the officer remained in his original office, although it was no longer eponymous). Interestingly enough, this had not always been the case, as the Assyrian eponym was also originally determined annually by lot.

¹³⁴ The Assyrian New Year was a feast in celebration of the god Aššur, where the king was crowned anew.

¹³⁵ This presentation leans heavily on the discussion in Hansen 1991, 49-50.

The rotation principle of the Assyrian eponyms has a parallel in the Athenian institution of rotating *prytaneis* of the Council: In turn, as determined by the lot, each phyle's members formed the prytany, for thirty-six or thirty-five days (since it was a lunar year) (Ath. Pol. 43.2). They prescribed what business the Council was to deal with, on each particular day, and where it was to meet (Ath. Pol. 43.3). In the same manner, they prescribed the meetings of the Assembly (Ath. Pol. 43.4).

So, the principle of rotating magistracies, the use of the lot to determine magistrates and the institution of eponymous officials are traits found in both the Athenian and Assyrian political systems. They were put to practice in different ways, but have structural similarities. Records from the Neo-Assyrian Empire do mention engagements with Greeks in the 8th century, and it is interesting to note these similarities between two such otherwise completely different political structures.

7.5.3 An instance of *euthūna* in the Codex Hammurapi?

The institutionalised scrutiny of officials at the end of their term of office was an important element in radical Athenian democracy. This practice of holding officials to account was a measure against corruption, and made sure that officials could not establish a basis for private power through abuse of their position. Magistrates were supervised by the people, in a way no other ancient society is known to have done.

There is a paragraph, however, in the Codex Hammurapi which resembles an Athenian *euthūna*: A judge who is accused of misconduct in office must answer in the assembly. If he is found guilty, he must pay a fine in relation to the amount involved in the case, and he is expelled from his office as judge (Cod. Ham. §5).

The scrutiny of accused officials was an instituted practice. The accused was examined in the assembly. The punishment for misconduct in office was a fine, and the loss of the right to hold office. It is not clear, however, whether such scrutiny was performed regularly, or whether it only took place under suspicion of misconduct. It was at any rate written down in the collection of laws; this shows that such scrutiny happened frequently enough to make it necessary to establish a standard principle of how those who were found guilty should be punished.

7.6 Discussion

Was Kleisthenes the hero of the story, or the demos, or none? Should the change be termed a revolution or an evolution or an accident? These questions have spawned a vast literature. Representatives of current views and arguments in the debates on the reforms of Kleisthenes

and Ephialtes have been discussed above, to determine the role of these events in relation to the origins of democracy.

Scholars differ in their view of the Athenian reforms of the late 6th and early 5th century much in the same way as Herodotos and Aristotle differ in their accounts of the events: Was Athenian democracy introduced by Kleisthenes the reformer, or was it a decision of the demos? De Coulanges and Spahn are the most explicit defenders of the reformer-hypothesis, whereas Ober and Ringvej emphasise the people as independent agents. Samons presents a variant of the reformer-hypothesis: Kleisthenes was the right man at the right moment, but ends up without a motive, other than to obtain the support of the people. Democracy was an unprecedented consequence of the reforms. Farrar's hypothesis of a philosophical development towards a democratic way of thinking, and thereby, acting, involves an element of teleology. It does not really explain how or why democracy came to be, but rather demonstrates that philosophical thinking and political practice were contingent fields of knowledge in Ancient Greece. Meier's account is more balanced, and puts the reforms in a larger perspective, without presenting Athenian democracy as an inevitable consequence. In his analysis, Kleisthenes does not propagate a specific constitution, partly because democracy was no explicit concept at the time. Rather, Kleisthenes was a political player, whereas the people wanted isonomia, as a solution to the crisis of the 6th century. The reforms were thus the product of a necessity for political change, which was felt by both the elite and the masses. This led to a decisive change in the balance within the aristocratic game of power, which eventually led to democracy in Athens.

Jacoby does not attempt to explain the effect of the reforms, since his chief concern is to discern the different sources to Athenian history. His thesis of party-politics is interesting for its emphasis on manipulation of the sources by leading politicians, and is a useful reminder that we don't, and never will, have the complete picture of the period in question. The idea of a Perikleian source for Herodotos fits well with the later mention (and refutation) by Plutarchos of the rumour that Perikles had rid himself of Ephialtes. Obviously, several versions of the events were in existence. Hansen's interpretation of the reforms of Kleisthenes as a military reform corresponds to the view that Greek democracy was a result of the hoplite reform and other military developments. It may be argued, however, that this hypothesis underestimates the civilian side of Athenian society. After all, Athenian citizens were not full-time professional fighters; there were several situations of political deliberation outside the martial sphere. Athenian politics may therefore be analysed separate from military developments, and need not have been determined by them. Bleicken's account also relies on

military reforms as an explanation for broadening the basis for political participation. He emphasises the uniqueness of the Athenian situation, and seeks to explain how Athenian history leads up to democracy, each event building on the preceding one. This view may be criticised for projecting knowledge of 5th century Athenian democracy backwards in time, and explaining the development as a too coherent chain of events. He thereby plays up to the view that radical democracy was only possible in Athens, because only Athens had undergone the necessary historical developments.

Hanson sees the Athenian democracy as a realisation of developments in the 7th and 6th centuries, and demonstrates that there was a broad support among the non-elite for a democratic constitution. His analysis is restricted to Athens and military developments, and thereby, some aspects are lost.

To some degree, the uniqueness of Athens is also overstated in Ringveij's hypothesis. The analysis of radical democracy as the realisation of the autonomy of the people, and the emphasis on the agenda-setting function of the Council of Five Hundred makes a concise argument for how democracy differs from other political practices. Focussing on how radical democracy worked, and who actually were in power after the reforms of Kleisthenes, it is a rebuttal of the thesis of a "moderate democracy". Against this presentation, however, it may be argued that without an inclusion of the cultural environment and preceding historical developments, Athenian democracy becomes too abstract. The thesis does not really explain the development of democracy, for its focus on how it worked in practice.

The political practice in assemblies and councils is fundamental to the success of Athenian democracy, and such skills and experience could hardly be learnt over night. Thus, a long-term practical and thereby philosophical development lies at the root of Athenian democracy. To attribute democracy to a decision, either by a political leader or an angry mob, does not explain democracy. It begs the question how anyone could decide to introduce a political system which was supposedly unknown prior to 508/7. One might argue that Athenian democracy was a singular event, a stroke of luck, a unique, atavistic coincidence. If that was the case, any historical analysis of an evolution of Athenian democracy would be meaningless. Fortunately, this is not the case. Not only were there preceding developments in the Greek world leading up to Athenian democracy. There were also parallel institutions and political practices in polities from the broader political environment, which might help explain the phenomenon democracy as the product of an evolution. The Athenian democracy, for all its idiosyncrasies, must be analysed in view of preceding political and cultural developments, as has been done by Meier and others. This analysis, however, can be extended to include the

broader cultural environment. This may shed some new light on how Kleisthenes, Ephialtes and the Athenian demos might have been thinking at the time of the events; to determine the conceptual framework available to an Athenian reformer in the 6th century.

The reliance on external resources and the interaction between the reformers of Athenian politics and oriental powers are interesting aspects of the history of Athenian democracy: Solon sought the assistance of the Cretan sage Epimenides (Plut. *Sol.* 12), and later went on a journey to Lydia and Egypt (Plut. *Sol.* 26-27). Kleisthenes sought the military assistance of the Spartans (Hdt. 5.63). The Athenians wanted to make an alliance with the Persians in Sardes, after the expulsion of Isagoras and the Spartans (Hdt. 5.73). After the Athenian victories in the Persian Wars and the establishment of the Delian league, the military reformer Themistokles was ostracised, and later defected to the Persians in Sardes (Plut. *Them.* 22-31).

These instances are reminders that Athens did not exist in a vacuum. The establishment of a democratic constitution took place in a political environment characterised by imperial policies and external pressures, as well as interaction with other powers. The instability of the political situation in Athens is demonstrated by the readiness of the Athenians to encourage the intervention of external forces. Democratic Athens became an imperial power herself, dominating the other members of the Delian league and exhorting revenues for her aggressive naval policy in the 5th century. The instances of parallelism between Late Archaic Athens and the Ancient Near East may modify the view that Athenian democracy was an indigenous and unique Athenian development. The Athenians could monitor developments elsewhere and adapt to their own system what was of interest.

The comparative evidence referred to above suggest that some of the traits commonly described as peculiar to democratic Athens have possible parallels in Ancient Near Eastern polities. These include the liturgy, as an instituted act of civilian expenditure for the good of the state, which was performed both in Greek and Mesopotamian cities. Official scrutiny of magistrates was an instituted practice in Babylonia. Concerning territorial reforms, both Uru'inimginak and Kleisthenes placed areas of land belonging to the city-state under the titular authority of divinities, removing them and their inhabitants from the control and manipulation of private land-owners. Eponymous officials, officials selected by lot, and rotation of offices are practices attested both in democratic Athens and in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Finally, as has been argued throughout this thesis, Ancient Near Eastern city-states, like the Sumerian and Phoenician, were ruled by councils and assemblies. These city-states also had kings, but royal power was granted by and controlled through the council and the

assembly. Decisions had to be reached in public debate, much as in Homeric society, and later, in democratic Athens. Decisions of the king and the council could be altered by the assembly. Even the democratic Athenians had a nominal king, the basileus, although his political influence had been reduced to nothing by the 5th century.

Democracy was not without precedents, and its radical form in 5th century Athens was not at all that unique. The rural communities of Attica were organised in peasant assemblies, and such assemblies are evident from the earliest sources to Greek politics; Homer and Hesiod. It should be emphasised that the revolt of the demos and the ousting of the Spartans came after a prolonged period of civil strife and war. Perhaps the elite was wearied out by the struggle, and popular participation in the Council and the extended powers of the Assembly represent a capitulation to peasant attitudes, values and institutions? This is unlikely to be the case: Although isegoria may be compared to peasant attitudes, the parallels from city-states in the Ancient Near East should not be ignored; assemblies and councils were urban institutions. Athenian democracy need not have been the product of an indigenous political evolution, any less than other aspects of Greek culture. The Greeks were not the only civilised people in the Mediterranean, although they termed all non-Greek speakers “barbarian”.

7.7 Conclusion

To conclude with Jochen Bleicken, that democratic thinking might only have originated in Athens, because the prerequisites for democracy were peculiar for Athenian history and society (Bleicken 1995, 19-20), would be to ignore evidence. Athenian democracy was not unique; it was a variant of a form of city-state society, examples of which were demonstrably in existence for two millennia prior to the reforms of Kleisthenes.

What were the nature of the reforms of Kleisthenes and Ephialtes? How were the circumstances under which they were enacted, and which processes shaped them? It is important to have in mind that both reforms are enacted at the end of a prolonged civil strife, amounting to civil war. The reforms of Kleisthenes therefore gained legitimacy as crisis measures to prevent further strife. This goes partly for the reforms of Ephialtes as well, understood as a continuity of the reforms of Kleisthenes in securing power and influence to a larger group of citizens and curbing aristocratic factions. The reforms were based on already existing institutions. Political reforms involving a re-evaluation of the relative importance of political bodies within a constitution was no novelty of late 6th and early 5th century Athens.

Although it might be argued that Athenian democracy differs from all other known political systems in its emphasis on the agenda-setting function of the Council of Five

Hundred, it may be relevant that this institution had its predecessors not only in the early Greek polis, but also in Ancient Near Eastern polities. The principles of anti-professionalism and general exchangeability inherent in the Athenian Council, guaranteed by the use of the lot and rotation, may seem strange to us, as it did to contemporary critics of democracy. It should be kept in mind, however, that selection to office by lot and rotation of service was a principle known in the Neo-Assyrian Empire as well.

The Athenian ideal of egalitarianism finds its expression in the concept of *to meson*, the middle; an idea that society is something held in common, equally by all its members. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, this principle may be traced throughout the Homeric epics, Herodotos, and later writers as fundamental to Greek polis society. It also has its parallels in the Sumerian city-states of the middle 3rd millennium.

What may be unique to Athens is the institutionalisation of this egalitarianism through measures against ossification of power structures. These measures were accountability, the lot and public deliberation. Each of these measures may be traced back to elder predecessors, both Greek and Near Eastern. It is the combination of the three, however, which gave stability to the Athenian democracy, and distinguishes Athenian democracy in comparison with other ancient constitutions. It is nevertheless worth while to notice the many similarities between radical democracy and both Homeric society and Ancient Near Eastern polities. Athenian democracy was not a stroke of genius attributable to a single reformer, be it Solon, Kleisthenes, or Ephialtes. It was firmly based on traditional political institutions, which are documented from the earliest city-states onwards.

Athenian democracy was not a metaphysical idea or a realisation on the part of the demos of their own autonomy. Political institutions are based on relations of power. Power reflects a real economic situation, as well as being a product of ideology; it is not a product of reasoning alone. Ideas may of course change the world, but ideas exist in the world, and are shaped by it. Any analysis of political change must include an analysis of the environment in which political ideology is formed.

Athenian democracy was based on, and gradually evolved from, the Greek polis. The Greek polis was based on egalitarian relations of power among a greater or smaller group of people. It must be kept in mind that Athenian citizens made up a minority of the actual population in Athens, so that the term broad popular participation may be misleading. Democratic Athens was organised in much the same way as other city-states, in that it was ruled by a council and an assembly. In many respects, the bodies surrounding these two institutions, appointed by the Council annually by the lot, such as the *prytaneis* and the

boards,¹³⁶ were unique to Athens in that they aimed to prevent the elite from obtaining power behind the scenes. On the other hand, there are definite examples of powerful individuals of the elite holding sway over the city, through their adherents among the people and through the establishment of cliques. Interestingly, the principle of public deliberation, which Herodotos held to be one of the characteristic features of Athenian democracy (Hdt.3.80.6), is also that with the eldest predecessors. From the Sumerian city-state onwards, it is a recurring feature of city-states that important decisions be taken and made known in public. The Athenians were not revolutionaries. They were traditionalists.

¹³⁶ cf. Ath. Pol. 50-54.

8 General conclusion of part III

From the comparison of Greek and Near Eastern evidence, there seems to be sufficient similar traits between Athenian democracy and political practices in Near Eastern city-states to claim that democracy was no isolated political phenomenon. An element of democracy was present as an inherent principle of political organisation from the earliest city-state communities in Mesopotamia, and never vanished from the Near Eastern city-states, although other forms of organisation took over. The division of rule into a king or leader who shared power with a council and an assembly is a general model of political organisation in city-states. Further, the specific Athenian institutions of scrutiny of officials, selection of officers by lot, and common deliberation in the assembly all have their parallels from Near Eastern polities.

This is not surprising, given the close interaction between Greeks and the Near East throughout the early development of the Greek polis. Communities in Mesopotamia and the Levant had advanced urban constitutions in a period of history where Greek communities barely had urban centres. The establishment of poleis was intensified in the 8th century, however, and soon the Greek cities were self-conscious political units in their own right.

From the initial organisation of power in an assembly, which had the power to grant leadership and appoint a champion, the dynamics of assembly and ruler is evident: The king could not rule without the consent of an assembly of the people. At a later stage, this became institutionalised in city-state constitutions where councils and assemblies deliberated on and ratified the proposals of the king. Politics took the form of common deliberation within the community.

From the initial organisation of political communities, like in Sumer and in the society of the Homeric epics, it is clear that the political community equalled its citizens. Power was held in common, and decisions were reached through deliberation.

The parallels between Phoenician and Greek political institutions are interesting, because they demonstrate that the political development found in Athens had its counterparts in communities outside the Greek poleis. A democratic organisation of power was not only conceivable, but also practiced, in the Phoenician city-states. The interaction between Greeks and Phoenicians may have caused these similarities; at any rate, the Greek poleis and the Levantine city-states seem each to have a share in a common development of political institutions and political culture based on egalitarian principles.

Hoplites probably had little to do with the development of democracy; the origins of democracy were not solely due to internal, Athenian processes, but were probably part of a wider development of the city-state in the Dark Ages and the Archaic Age.

The Athenian parallels with the Near East are not restricted to the 8th century, however. In the 6th century, there are good reasons for placing the reforms of Solon in a long tradition of political reforms, including the reformation of city-states in Mesopotamia. The Greeks had knowledge of the wider Mediterranean environment, and travelled extensively. Some traits evident in Greek political culture, such as the divine tutelage of individual city-states, and the close relationship between rulers and gods, may point to a concept of political power held in common with the Mesopotamians.

The reforms of Kleisthenes may also be said to resemble Mesopotamian reforms in their form, if not in their effect. The radical Athenian democracy, with its scrutiny of officials, selection of officials by lot and common deliberation on all political matters, finds its parallel institutions in communities of the Near East. There are few elements in Athenian political culture which may not be found in other parts of the Mediterranean or the Near East as well. It was the specific combination of these elements which made Athenian democracy what it was. On the other hand, democratic practice and thinking was not a unique Athenian phenomenon. It forms part of a wider political development which includes the city-states of the Ancient Near East.

9 General conclusions

This thesis has covered a vast time-span, and a huge geographical area, in an attempt to determine the origins of democracy. The strategy for answering the question whence came democracy, was to pose three separate questions, which have been addressed throughout this thesis:

Is it methodologically sound and theoretically possible that Greek and Ancient Near Eastern political structures resemble each other? The analysis of Greek and Near Eastern texts using anthropological concepts revealed that the political structure of early Greek society, as inferred from the epics, and the Mesopotamian early city-states, as inferred from mythological texts, were similar in important respects. The leader or king based his power on redistribution and gifts to attain a prominent position in society. In situations where leadership was needed, this prominent position may become institutionalised through an assembly. Leaders were elected; leadership was attainable only through the popular assembly. The egalitarian structure of power is continued in the city-state constitutions of the Mesopotamian city-states, where the king seem to have ruled together with a council and an assembly. The same structure may be found in Homer.

The analysis of political practice in the assemblies through discourse-analysis also revealed similar traits between Mesopotamia and Greece. Maintenance of leadership depended on eloquence. The assembly is ruled by a certain discourse; it was a place of struggle and contest, but also a place for political schooling. Deliberation in public assemblies continued to be a source of political decisions and of justice throughout Greek and Near Eastern history. Through the employment of theoretical concepts from anthropology and discourse-analysis, similarities between political structures in Greece and the Ancient Near East could be demonstrated.

The second question, whether it is historically and geographically probable that an Ancient Near Eastern influence on the development of Greek politics took place, may be answered by archaeology. Excavations at several sites have yielded material which make it highly probable that Greek interaction with Near Eastern peoples started in the Dark Age, perhaps already in the 11th century. It is at any rate almost certain that Greeks were involved in interaction with the Near East from the 10th century. This development was intensified from the 8th century, and Greeks lived together with Syrian peoples and Phoenicians, both in Syria, and on Cyprus and in the western colonies. There is also evidence for itinerant craftsmen from the Levant living and working in Greece. Cyprus, Euboea, and later

Pithekoussai probably were international environments where new knowledge reached the Greeks.

Since urbanism was poorly developed in Greece in the 10th and 9th centuries, whereas cities were thriving in the Levant in the same period, it is not unlikely that the Greek polis evolved in the 8th century under Near Eastern influence. During the colonial period of the 8th to the 6th centuries, interaction with Phoenicians is evident throughout the Mediterranean. The development of democracy in Greece may have been influenced by the constitutions of Phoenician city-states. The Greeks at any rate took over the alphabet from Near Eastern peoples. The Phoenician colonies abroad were probably quite similar to Greek settlements; they exchanged goods with the local inhabitants, and brought gifts to elites and to sanctuaries. The Phoenicians, like the Greeks, also settled permanently, and were engaged in agriculture. The Greeks seem to have been a part of Near Eastern culture in several respects, especially regarding political organisation and mythology.

The third question, whether there are structural similarities between Ancient Near Eastern and Greek political institutions that make it probable that Athenian democracy developed from Ancient Near Eastern predecessors, must be answered with some caution. The comparative reading of Greek and Near Eastern texts show that several elements are held in common. There are, however, certain developments which are peculiar to Greece in general, and Athens in particular. The combination of scrutiny of officials, selection of magistrates by lot and the practice of common deliberation on all political issues makes Athenian radical democracy unique. Its constituent elements, however, were shared with several polities in the Near East. This makes it possible that some of these elements may have become a part of Greek political practice through interaction with the Near East. This must have taken place at an early stage of the development of the polis, probably before or during the 8th century.

An analysis of Athenian political events from Solon to Ephialtes reveal several similarities with Near Eastern polities. The emphasis on oracles and the supernatural in politics is quite similar to Mesopotamian practices, and demonstrate that Greek politicians belonged to a cultural environment quite different from that of modern democratic reformers or revolutionary leaders. Solon had his Mesopotamian predecessors in seeking to right the wrongs done against the destitute in the community. Peisistratos attempted to sanctify his claim to power through his personal relationship with the city-goddess. Kleisthenes reduced the influence of rich landowners over local farmers by putting local communities within the polis under the protection of divine heroes. The several examples of parallels between Greece

and the Near East serve to demonstrate that Greek politics were part of a wider cultural environment. The political concepts and frame of references for the Greeks were influenced by Near Eastern cultures. In this respect, it is justified to conclude that Athenian democracy emerged as a stage in a continuous development of the city-state. Several political traits and constitutional developments were common to both Greeks and Near Eastern peoples. The Greeks were not alone in having a political structure where the community equalled the polity. Democracy had its origins in the Ancient Near East.

Figure 1

Three phases of interaction between the Aegean and the Levant

<p>Phase 1 of Al Mina (Boardman 1990)</p>	<p>Phase 1 of Iron Age world-system (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993)</p>	<p>Phase 1 of negotiated peripherality in phases (Morris 1999)</p>
<p>Pre-Al Mina → mid 9th century, i.e. Middle Geometric (no continuity LBA to EIA)</p> <p>Phoenician priority in trade</p> <p>10th/9th century Lefkandi; Euboeans active in the East</p>	<p>10th/9th century</p> <p>Levantine core, manufacture of goods for export</p> <p>Search for metals and raw materials</p> <p>Luxury goods at Lefkandi</p> <p>Attic and Euboean ceramics on Cyprus</p> <p>Eastern craftsmen on Crete</p>	<p>10/9th century</p> <p>Reversal of the process of contraction and decline of Near Eastern cultures starting in the 13th century</p> <p>Phoenicians abroad</p> <p>Greeks abroad</p> <p>Revival in long-distance trade</p> <p>9th century exotica in Greek burials break with 10th century ideology</p>
<p>Phase 2 of Al Mina</p> <p>Middle Geometric to early Late Geometric, 9th/8th century</p> <p>First major arrival of Greek pottery in the Levant</p> <p>No colonies in the West</p> <p>Immigrant artisans in Greece</p> <p>Probable beginning of alphabetism in Greece (Aramaic involvement)</p>	<p>Phase 2 of Iron Age world-system</p> <p>8th century</p> <p>Beginning Neo-Assyrian expansion</p> <p>Intensified exchange between the Aegean and the Levant</p> <p>Orientalising traits in Greek culture, writing</p> <p>Visits to international sanctuaries</p> <p>Initiated colonies in the West</p>	<p>10th century graves simple, Lefkandi an exception. Egalitarianism 1025-1000. Poorer graves 825-800, changing attitudes towards the East</p> <p>Phase 2 of negotiated peripherality</p> <p>8th century</p> <p>Explosion in trading activities, Greek and Phoenician expansion into the Mediterranean</p> <p>Increased population in the East (Greece)</p> <p>Intensified warfare and centralization</p>
<p>Phase 3 of Al Mina</p> <p>Late Geometric, 8th/7th century Colonisation</p> <p>Orientalia in the West</p> <p>North Syrian products</p> <p>Foreign votives in Greek sanctuaries</p> <p>Phoenicians Euboeans → Samians, Rhodians</p>	<p>Phase 3 of Iron Age world-system</p> <p>7th century</p> <p>Levantine finds scarce in Greece, less than earlier</p> <p>Animosity between Greeks and Phoenicians</p> <p>Phoenician ships the largest in the Mediterranean</p> <p>Silver as medium of exchange, urban economy</p> <p>Labour-intensive manufacture of textiles and perfumes</p>	<p>Phase 3 of negotiated peripherality</p> <p>8/7th century numerous finds of exotica in sanctuaries</p>

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