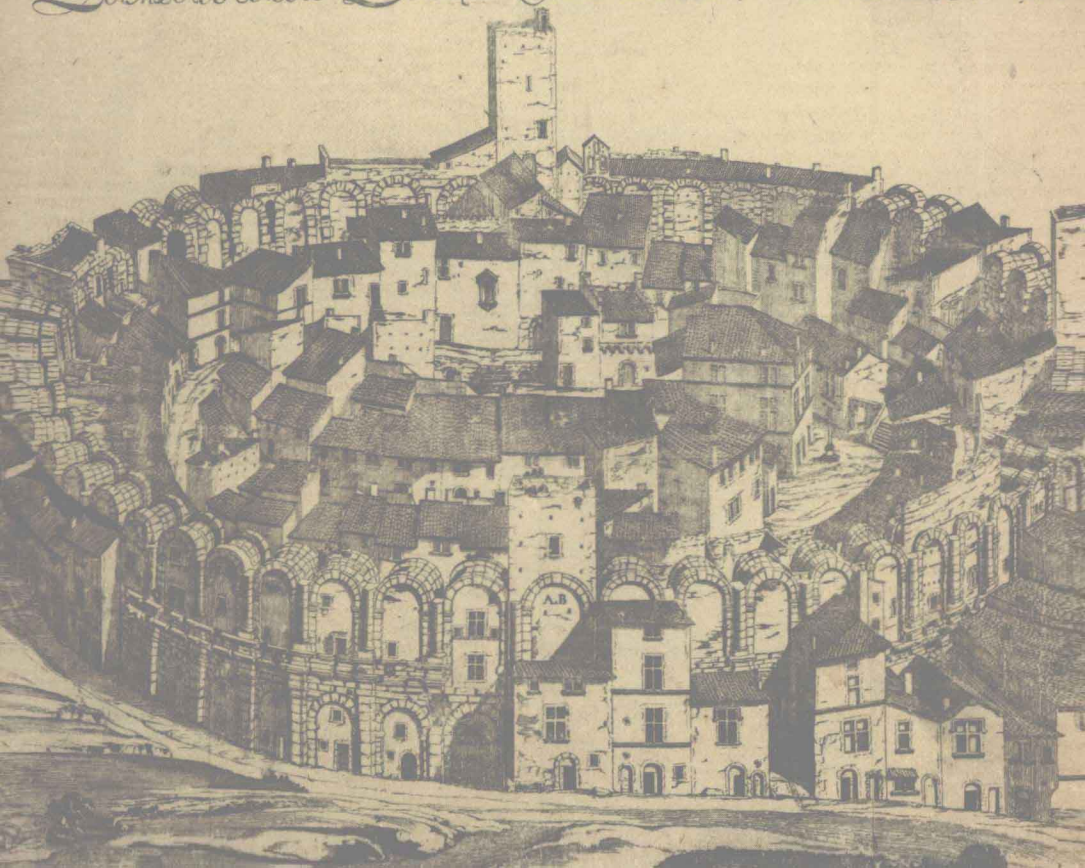


GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES IN HISTORY

EDITED BY

Eugene D. Genovese and
Leonard Hochberg

La Ville de Dijon Comme Elle Est, A Present, 1686



Geographic Perspectives in History

Edited by
EUGENE D. GENOVESE
and
LEONARD HOCHBERG

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Editor's Preface

During the last decade or so the long and debilitating separation of geography from history and, more broadly, the social sciences has begun to be overcome. Not even the most optimistic among those who regard the separation as appalling, not to say stupid, would claim that the battle has been won or even that victory has been assured in what promises to be a long struggle for reintegration. But the publication fifteen years ago of Edward Whiting Fox's *History in Geographic Perspective* reopened the discussion at an impressively high level, stimulated creative thought among the practitioners of the relevant disciplines, and offered exciting theses and hypotheses on which to build.

Eschewing geographic determinism and reductionism, Edward Fox sketched a heuristically powerful and historically specific argument for the limits imposed – and opportunities offered – by geography on human action. We might reasonably claim for Edward Fox in relation to Arnold Toynbee, who clearly influenced him, what Marx claimed for himself in relation to Hegel: he stood Toynbee on his head – respectfully, lovingly, transformed a dialectical idealism into a materialist interpretation of social development. Fox's materialism, however, departs radically from that of Marx both as historical interpretation and as world view and attendant politics. At a time when 'liberalism' may fairly be said to be at bay, he has firmly reclaimed much of its historical and philosophical ground and has proudly reasserted its finest values, while impatiently, if politely, dispensing with its pretensions and cant.

Edward Fox's book represented the culmination of a life of the study and teaching of history and provided a hint, although probably no more than that, of the grounds on which his reputation as a great teacher have been based. In particular, as demonstrated by his editorship of Cornell's superb series of books on western civilization, he has compelled his peers, his students, and all who have been privileged to know him to value and cherish a great tradition that has – we hope temporarily – fallen on

evil days. Certainly, as this volume demonstrates, his thought has had a profound impact on a wide variety of scholars from many disciplines and from most points on the ideological and political spectrum from, as it were, left to right.

This is not a festschrift, although it may have some of the attributes of one. Rather, it represents a many-sided attempt to come to terms with Edward Fox's thought and to demonstrate some of the possible lines of advance from it. The editors invited historians, geographers, anthropologists, political scientists, and sociologists to present their thoughts and the fruits of their research in relation to the problems posed by his challenging book. Each has proceeded independently but, we believe, in a manner that has produced a coherent if open-ended whole. The contributors agree with each other primarily in believing that Edward Fox has successfully challenged us to reconsider the geographic influence on history, not merely in general but with pregnant specificity, and has advanced ideas with which all serious historians, geographers, and social scientists must engage. But we also agree that the highest compliment that one scholar can pay to another is to *engage* with his thought, whether in agreement or no, and to build on it.

In that spirit this book will, we trust, speak for itself both as a series of contributions toward the reintegration of geography and the social sciences and as a modest tribute to the man who inspired it.

The editors wish to thank the Department of Cartography of Miami University for generous assistance with maps.

EUGENE D. GENOVESE
LEONARD HOCHBERG

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PART I

France and Europe

1

First by Land, Then by Sea: Thoughts about the Social Formation of the Mediterranean and Greece

MARTIN BERNAL

It is surprising that the history of Ancient Greece should make so little sense. It is, after all, a country that is seen as central to European or 'western civilization', and it is the only one to have the larger part of an established academic discipline devoted to it. Conventional wisdom provides no coherent description, let alone any explanation, of Greek origins, of the rise and fall of Mycenaean society in the Late Bronze Age, or of the development of Archaic and Classical Greece in the first millennium BC. Before attempting a remedy, let us look at the historiography of the origins of Ancient Greece. Fully aware that models inevitably betray the complex texture of reality and that one should always be wary of reification, I want to distinguish between two models of Greek history, which I call the Ancient and the Aryan.

The Aryan, in which most of us have been educated, holds that Greek civilization originated in the conquest of the country from the north by Indo-European speakers. The native 'Pre-Hellenes' are seen as civilized but soft and, though not Indo-European, white and Caucasian – definitely not African or Semitic. Thus there was no 'racial' mixture. Greek culture, like the cultures of Medieval Europe and India, is seen as the offspring of this mating of Beauty and the Beast: a vigorous 'male' northern domination over a gentle 'female' culture.¹ Unlike the collapse of the

¹ For a discussion of the rise of the Aryan Model see my 'Black Athena Denied: The Tyranny of Germany over Greece and the Rejection of the Afroasiatic Roots of Europe, 1780–1980', *Comparative Criticism*, 8 (Spring 1986), pp. 3–69; and *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of European Civilization* (3 vols, Free Association Press, London, 1987), vol. 1: *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985*.

Roman Empire or the Vedic conquests of northern India, however, no record or folk memory of such a conquest existed in Greece. As J. B. Bury, one of the leading practitioners of the Aryan Model, put it: 'The true home of the Greeks before they won dominion in Greece had passed clean out of their remembrance, and they looked to the east not to the north, as the quarter from which some of their ancestors had migrated.'²

What Bury saw as faulty memory, I describe as the 'Ancient Model'. This historical scheme was used by most Greek writers concerned with understanding their distant past, omitted by one or two, but denied by none. According to it, Greece had originally been inhabited by primitive tribes, Pelasgians and others, and had been settled by Egyptians and Phoenicians, who had built cities and introduced irrigation. The Phoenicians had brought many things, notably the alphabet, and the Egyptians had taught the natives the names of the gods and how to worship them.³ Greece had continued to borrow culturally from Egypt and Phoenicia and most leading Greek statesmen, philosophers, mathematicians, and scientists were supposed to have acquired their pre-eminence after having studied in Egypt.⁴

This Ancient Model went unchallenged in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. During the Christian era the only debate was on the priority of Hermetic, that is, Egyptian, philosophy and religion over those of the Bible. Not surprisingly, the Church Fathers came down in favor of the latter. Neither side disputed that 'gentile' wisdom had come to Greece and Rome from Egypt. Despite the centrality of Hermetic learning to Renaissance humanism and the 'scientific revolution', most

² John Bagnell Bury, *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great* (Macmillan, London, 1900), p. 25.

³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, Bk 2, 5.58 and 6.55; Aeschylus, *The Suppliants*; Euripides, *The Phoenician Women*; Isocrates, *Helen*, 10.68; Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, especially 2.16 & 38; Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, 1; and many others.

⁴ Giorgio de Santillana, 'On Forgotten Sources in the History of greek Science', in *Scientific Change: Historical Studies in the Intellectual, Social and Technical Conditions for Scientific Discovery and Technical Invention, from Antiquity to the Present: Symposium on the History of Science, University of Oxford 9-15 July 1961*, ed. A. C. Crombie (Heinemann, London, 1963), pp. 813-28. See also George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy: The Greeks Were Not the Authors of Greek Philosophy, but the People of North Africa, Commonly Called the Egyptians*, reprinted with intro. by Asa Hilliard (Julian Richardson Associates, San Francisco, 1976). For Phoenician sources see William Foxwell Albright, 'Neglected Factors in the Greek Intellectual Revolution', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 116 (1972), pp. 225-42.

enthusiasts for Egypt and its religion were able to maintain at least the appearance of Christian orthodoxy. The convention was broken by Giordano Bruno, who, as well as proclaiming Copernican heliocentricity, openly called for a return to the religion of ancient Egypt, the *prisca theologia* – the religion behind all others. In this way he hoped to transcend the divisions within Christianity and those between it and other faiths.⁵ Bruno's ideas seem to have been fundamental to the mysterious Rosicrucians of the seventeenth century.⁶ They were certainly the basis of 'speculative' Freemasonry as it emerged at the beginning of the eighteenth.⁷ This created a reaction against Egypt among defenders of Christianity and, because of new forces to be discussed below, by the middle of the century these attacks, for the first time, included attempts to raise the cultural status of the Greeks above that of the Egyptians.⁸ They failed in the face of the authority of the Ancient Model and the Enlightenment's enthusiasm for Egypt. Thus, for the most part, the Ancient Greeks continued to be seen as poets but poor philosophers whose greatest achievement was in having preserved some part of the wisdom of Egypt and the Orient.⁹

This image was overthrown at the turn of the nineteenth century, by the revival of Christianity after the French Revolution and the triumphs of the concept of progress and of Romanticism. With a passion for peculiarity and small societies bound by kinship and rooted in a particular soil, the Romantics attacked the universality of the Enlightenment, with its preference for large 'rational' empires – Roman, Egyptian, or Chinese. Romantics asserted that demanding environments, particularly the cold of mountains or the north, produced the most virtuous people – those capable of maintaining free institutions. These assertions, coupled with a belief in the permanence of racial essences through all their changes

⁵ Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1964).

⁶ Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1972).

⁷ Margaret C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689–1720* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1976); Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1981).

⁸ William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses: Demonstrated, on the Principles of a Religious Deist from the Omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Reward and Punishment in the Jewish Dispensation* (6 vols, F. Gyles, London, 1738–41), vol. III, 1, pp. 395–8, and vol. IV, 5, pp. 229–61.

⁹ See Bernal, 'Black Athena Denied', pp. 8–10.

of form, made it 'impossible' for the virtuous Greeks, with their free cities, to have derived their culture from the south and east.

Closely associated with Romanticism was the rise of systematic racism that projected an integral connection between virtue, manliness, intelligence, and skin color. Many pillars of the Enlightenment, including Locke, Hume and Voltaire, were racists. As others saw, however, racism contradicted enlightened universalism and the deep and widespread respect for China and Egypt, which was held especially by men like Bruce, Dupuis, Volney, and Champollion, who believed that Egypt was essentially African.¹⁰ Thus connections between racism and the Enlightenment were contingent, while those between racism and Romanticism were necessary since the two systems, with their emphases on northern virtue, crude geographical determinism, and the importance of kinship and blood-ties, are neatly congruent.¹¹ Socially and politically, the rise of racism in the eighteenth century was clearly influenced by the northern Europeans' need to denigrate the peoples they were exploiting, enslaving, and exterminating in other continents.¹² European expansion also strengthened the new paradigm of progress. While in previous centuries paradigms of decline or historical cycles meant that the greater antiquity of the Egyptians and Phoenicians was to their credit, the idea that 'later is better' clearly benefited the Greeks, as did the growing and related cult of youthful dynamism. Ancient Greece was now seen as ancient Europe's childhood – itself a new concept that combined sentimentality and Romanticism with progress. Until the eighteenth century the antiquity and stability of Egypt had been foci of admiration; they now began to be seen as marks of failure.

These interwoven beliefs made the Ancient Model intolerable. Greece, the epitome of youthful and dynamic Europe, could not have gained

¹⁰ James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773* (5 vols, Robinson, Edinburgh 1790); Charles François Dupuis, *Origine de Tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle* (2nd edn, 7 vols, Babeuf, Paris, 1822); Constantin François Chasseboeuf, Comte de Volney, *Les Ruines, ou Méditations sur les Révolutions des Empires* (Levrault, Paris, an. 3, 1795); Hermine Hartleben, *Lettres de Champollion le Jeune* (2 vols, Leroux, Paris, 1909), vol. 2, pp. 427–8.

¹¹ Herder's attempt to give equal worth to all nations including those outside Europe was not followed by his intellectual descendents.

¹² See Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action 1780–1850* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1964); Sander L. Gilman, *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, Mass., 1982); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, New York, 1978).

its civilization from the static and senile, if not dead, culture of the southern and racially dubious Egyptians. The academic attack on the Ancient Model started at the University of Göttingen, which in retrospect can be seen as the embryo of all later German and American universities. Founded by George II, as Elector of Hanover, in 1737, it was free from medieval and religious shackles. It was also a center of German resistance to French cultural domination and an important conduit into Germany of British thought, which included not only the empiricism of Locke and Hume but also their racism and growing Scottish Romanticism.¹³ Göttingen had many distinguished professors who were academics of a new type. They established exclusive disciplines defended by professional journals and began to write in jargons that, though originally German, were comprehensible to even smaller circles than had been the Latin of the educated, generalist *Gelehrtenstand*, which the new academics were replacing.¹⁴ The new professors included the founders of romantic 'biographical' national historiography and Blumenbach, the first academic taxonomist of 'race' by skin color and the inventor of the term 'Caucasian'.¹⁵

The center of Göttingen was *Philologie*, a discipline dominated by C. G. Heyne, a professor there from 1763 to 1812.¹⁶ Heyne developed the seminar from the Socratic method and promoted the new technique of 'source criticism' by which the modern scholar was required to discriminate between worthless texts and ones that represented their times or the *Zeitgeist* – a term invented by his colleague Meiners. Using 'source criticism', the scholar could dismiss the quantity or wide spread of ancient attestation and focus on the one 'good' source that suited his purpose. Whether or not this method was developed to counter the Ancient Model –

¹³ Herbert Butterfield, *Man on his Past: The Study of The History of Historical Scholarship* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1955), pp. 125–36; Luigi Marino, *I Maestri della Germania: Göttingen 1770–1820* (Einaudi, Turin, 1975).

¹⁴ R. Steven Turner, 'Historicism, *Kritik*, and the Prussian Professoriate, 1790 to 1840', in *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19 Jahrhundert II*, eds. Mayotte Bollack and Heinz Wismann (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1983), pp. 450–77.

¹⁵ Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe*, tr. Edmund Howard (Chatto & Windus, Heinemann, London, 1974), pp. 188–9; Bernal, 'Black Athena Denied', pp. 16–17.

¹⁶ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *History of Classical Scholarship*, tr. Alan Harris, ed. with intro. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones (Duckworth, London, 1982), pp. 171–4; Rudolf Pfeiffer, *A History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976), pp. 171–2.

and it may have been – it proved effective against it.¹⁷ The one drawback was the lack of a single early classical source that explicitly repudiated the Ancient Model. Scholars were forced, therefore, to rely on the ‘tacit dissent’ they saw in the few ancient historians who failed to mention the legendary invasions.¹⁸

The Ancient Model did not fall immediately. It fell only after the defeat of the French Revolution and the reaction of the upper classes against the Enlightenment that was believed to have caused it. The triumphs of racism and Romanticism and the revival of Christianity combined to discredit Ancient Egypt, and after the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, worked to elevate Classical Greece. It was in the passionate Philhellenism of the 1820s that the Göttingen professor Carl Otfried Müller demolished the idea of there ever having been any Egyptian colonies in Greece, by bringing out internal contradictions in the legends. He also neatly maneuvered himself into a position of ‘scientific’ scepticism by demanding ‘proof’ of the invasions.¹⁹ The requirement of proof, inappropriate for many subjects, is absurd for early Greek history. The best one can hope for is competitive plausibility. Even, if like Müller, one accepts the requirement, it is odd to demand it of those who follow a broadly based ancient tradition rather than from those who challenge it. The great and long-lasting success of the theories based on Müller’s dubious methods simply shows how well his conclusions fitted the *Zeitgeist* of his and later times.²⁰

The Aryan Model was not completed until after Müller’s premature and romantic death in Athens in 1840. His ideas of indigenous development had to be integrated with the new theories on language that were coming from another wing of the romantic movement. Though dimly perceived for a considerable period, a clear picture of the Indo-European language family only emerged in the 1830s. From this time, it became accepted that the urlanguage *Proto-Indo-European* had been

¹⁷ For an analogy, see the description by Stephen Jay Gould of the origins of factor analysis which ‘was invented in a social context and for definite reasons’, in his *The Mismeasure of Man* (W. W. Norton, New York, 1981), p. 238. Factor analysis has of course a far stronger mathematical and scientific base than *Quellenkritik*.

¹⁸ Connop Thirlwall, *A History of Greece* (8 vols, Longman, Rees, Brown, Green & Longman, London, 1835–44), vol. 1, pp. 67–8. Thirlwall did not cite Plutarch’s *De malign. Herod.* apparently because of Plutarch’s ‘lateness’ (second century AD) and unreliability. Plutarch took it for granted that Greek religion derived from Egypt.

¹⁹ Bernal, ‘Black Athena Denied’, pp. 35–6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

formed in some central Asian mountains.²¹ The theory received powerful support from Indian traditions of a northern Aryan invasion, which also encouraged the postulation of a similar Aryan invasion of the Balkans and Greece despite the absence of a supporting tradition. The tribal movement within Greece known as the Return of the Heraclids was renamed the Dorian Invasion, and attempts were made to push the Dorian homeland northwards. Unfortunately, since the Return took place after the Trojan War its identification with the Aryan Invasion requires the transfer of such Homeric heroes as Agamemnon and Achilles to the category of 'Pre-Hellenes', a price few scholars have been willing to pay. In the 1950s, the reading of the Bronze Age Script Linear B as Greek rendered the identification of the Aryan with the Dorian Invasion untenable. Some scholars still cling to the theory that the Dorian was the last in a series of invasions, but even this cumbersome theory does not provide any information about the arrival of Indo-European speech in Greece.

It is sometimes maintained that an important reason for the discrediting of the ideas that make up the Ancient Model was the disillusion with eastern cultures after Champollion's decipherment of hieroglyphics and the reading of Babylonian cuneiform. But these new sources of information only began to be accepted by the majority of classicists after the Aryan Model was firmly in place. Nor did the Aryan Model arise from archaeological discoveries, for the earliest work on Bronze Age Greece—Schliemann's—came in the 1870s. The new sources of information were simply fitted into the Aryan Model.

To proceed, we must distinguish between two branches of the Aryan Model, the 'Broad' and the 'Extreme'. The Broad, established by the 1840s, denied the tradition of Egyptian influence on Greece but for the most part accepted that of the Phoenicians. The Extreme denied even Phoenician influence. Since the end of the eighteenth century, there had been little doubt that the 'best race' was the Caucasian. The Caucasuses were the mountains in which Prometheus had been imprisoned. Prometheus, whose bold and self-sacrificing character was soon seen as typically 'Aryan', was the son of Lapetos who was identified with the biblical Japhet. Despite these non-Semitic connotations, many nineteenth century writers included the 'Semites'—a new linguistic term, soon used

²¹ Holger Pedersen, *The Discovery of Language: Linguistic Science in the Nineteenth Century*, tr. John Webster Spargo (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1959), pp. 240–77.

racially – among the Caucasians.²² With the demotion of the Egyptians, the Chinese, and all other peoples, and the establishment of the Indo-European and Semitic language families, two master races emerged: the Aryans and the Semites. These were seen in perpetual dialectic, the Semites having given the world religion and poetry, and the Aryans manliness, democracy, philosophy, and science.

In classical scholarship this view allowed the legendary Phoenician role in Greece to be tolerated. Indeed, the reputation of the Phoenicians actually rose to compensate for the disappearance of the Egyptians. The picture of stern seamen who spread civilization while making a tidy profit from selling cloth and from a little bit of slave-trading was especially appealing in England. In Germany, however, this positive image was never so widely accepted, and German scholarship was central to the new discipline of *Alttertumswissenschaft*, or Classics, and to the formation of the Extreme Aryan Model.

As the nineteenth century wore on, Europeans increasingly resented the amount of credit given to the Semites. They mounted efforts, which coincided with the rise of racial, in contradistinction to religious, anti-Semitism, to deny a Jewish role in the creation of poetry and Christianity. At least since the Renaissance, scholars had rightly seen a relation between Phoenicians and Jews, for both spoke dialects of the same Canaanite language. Thus, with the Dreyfus case of the 1890s a number of influential articles denied any extra-European or Semitic influences on Greece.²³ Competition between the Broad and Extreme versions of the Aryan Model persisted until the 1920s, when the Semites, both Jews and Phoenicians, were firmly put in their place – outside European civilization.

Their expulsion was related to the prominence of Jews in the Russian Revolution and world Communism. It was also the result of supreme self-confidence. Europeans, with the world at their mercy, could afford to turn on an ‘internal enemy’. The situation changed radically after 1945. The moral revulsion at the consequences of anti-Semitism and the simultaneous rise of the Third World, and of Israel as an ‘outpost of western civilization’, has led to the readmission of Jews as Europeans.

²² For Schlötzer, see Poliakoff, *The Aryan Myth*, p. 188.

²³ Outstanding among these were: M. Salomon Reinach, ‘Le mirage oriental’, *L’anthropologie*, 4 (1893), pp. 539–78 and 699–732; Julius Beloch, ‘Die Phoeniker am Aegaeischen Meer’, *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, NF. 49 (1894), pp. 111–32. For more on the whole process see Bernal, ‘Black Athena Denied’, pp. 49–53.