

RESPONSES TO *BLACK ATHENA*general and linguistic issues¹

Martin Bernal

Department of Government/ Department of Near Eastern Studies, Cornell University

1. Introduction

I had hoped by this time to have really worked much more on what is to be the substance of *Black Athena III*: the linguistic dimension of the *Black Athena* project, including Egyptian and West Semitic influences on classical Greek, the origins of the Egyptian language, the place of Egyptian in Afroasiatic as a whole as well as possible Kongo-Saharan influences on Ancient Egyptian. However, various other things, including the build up of a major attack on *Black Athena*,² have distracted me from this project. The linguistic dimension has emerged as an important element in this new offensive. My contribution to this volume, therefore, will deal with three interrelated topics:

- An outline of my view of the responses to *Black Athena* so far (vols. I and II)
- Language contact and the formation of the Greek language, in typological and general terms
- Some specific cases of what I see as loans from Semitic and Egyptian into Greek, including the central etymology which gave *Black Athena* its name.

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²Bernal, M., 1987, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization, I, The fabrication of Ancient Greece 1787-1987*, London: Free Association Books; New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; Bernal, M., 1991, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization, II. The archaeological and documentary evidence*, New Brunswick (N.J.): Rutgers University Press. For the attack in question, cf. Lefkowitz, M.R., & MacLean Rogers, G., eds, 1996, *Black Athena revisited*, Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press.

2. Responses to Black Athena

Soon after publication of *Black Athena I* I set out for myself a scheme³ according to which I believe new challenges to disciplines are received. I saw the first stage as 'ignore,' the second as 'dismiss,' the third as 'attack' and the fourth as 'absorb.' At a general level, this sequence has been followed in the case of *Black Athena* but there have been various interesting deviations from this pattern.

The first volume was published in 1987. To my surprise, it was not ignored, at least not by the liberal press in England. It received favourable reviews in *The Observer* and *The Guardian*. These gained it a university press in the United States. The presses of both California and Harvard were interested but were slow in responding. So I went with Rutgers University Press which had made a swift and unconditional offer.

I had planned the book as an outflanking maneuver. This was because I had assumed that no classicist or ancient historian, orientated towards the exploration of Ancient Near Eastern (including Ancient Egyptian) influence on classical Greek civilisation, would accept what I was saying. Therefore, I aimed the book at the cultivated lay public. I wanted to get classicists' non-classicist colleagues to ask them what was wrong with my ideas, thus forcing them to confront them. This did not take place in the short term. That is to say, during the first four years, I was wrong on both counts.

To begin with, in the U.S., no-one outside the field knew about the book. The reason for this was very simple: it was not reviewed in the *New York Times*. And in America, unless a book is reviewed in the *New York Times* it does not exist for the cultivated lay public.

The second surprise was the very pleasant one that there were a number of classicists who turned out to be sympathetic towards my ideas. They did not agree with everything, they were uncertain about it, but they were very interested. To my surprise and delight I found that there was a minority who wanted to investigate the issues that the book raised. And it was members of this group who organised a panel at the American Philological Association (the biggest organisation of classicists in the U.S. or, for that matter in the world). I was telephoned by a classicist who said to me: 'I like your book but I do not know whether I should believe it. Would you mind coming to a panel to discuss it at the A.P.A.?' I said that I would be delighted but of course, the discipline would not agree to that.

³The scheme was published in Bernal, M., 1989, '*Black Athena* and the APA', *Arethusa*, 22: 17-38, p. 18; APA = American Philological Association.

They would not have a discussion. Or, if they did, it would be marginalised by putting it in a back room on the last day of the conference at 8 o'clock in the morning. This would effectively marginalise it. The classicist called me back three weeks later, saying they had made it the 'Presidential Panel' of the conference.

In this way, the book was given real prominence. What is more, the committee took the organiser's religious sensitivities into account — she is an orthodox Jew — by attempting to avoid the Sabbath. She told me that this was a preliminary but significant result of *Black Athena*, as the discipline had never before shown any sensitivities to her religion!

Before the meeting took place, I went to see Thomas Kuhn, the historian and philosopher of science,⁴ who died just before the 1996 Leiden conference on which the present volume is based. I told him what was going on. His reaction was: 'It should not happen. Disciplines should not respond in this way so soon.' And I said: 'It is your fault. You have set up notions of paradigm shifts which have now reached even the most remote disciplines' — for classics is now a backwater compared to the natural and social sciences and modern languages and literature. I then changed tack: 'Perhaps it is just to set me up before I get going and that they want to chop me up in little pieces right at the start.' He replied: 'What happens at the meeting is completely uninteresting. The important thing is that it has been scheduled.' This was a wonderfully comforting doctrine and I went into the hall knowing I had nothing to lose. In fact the meeting was extremely decorous. There were only two outbursts, one against and one for me. But generally there were interesting papers and interesting responses. The proceedings were published in the classicist journal *Arethusa*. In fact two other journals, *Classical Philology* and *The Yale Journal of Criticism* — a literary critical magazine — also wanted to publish them. All this gave me a peculiar status within the discipline, as an outsider who was in some way licensed to speak and be published.

In this position, I think I upset many classicists. Now I estimate that, about 2/5ths of them detest me and spit at the mention of my name, making apotropaic gestures to keep the evil spirit away, when they hear the title *Black Athena*. Another 1/5th think that, despite mistakes, I am pushing in the right direction and opening up very interesting new fields. The final 2/5 disagree with much of what I am claiming but believe that these issues should be discussed. From 1989 when the APA meeting took place till 1995-1996 it was the middle group that really predominated in the classicists' response. This explains a series of meetings, and special issues

⁴Kuhn, T.S., 1970, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2nd ed., first ed. 1962.

of journals such as the *Journal of Mediterranean Archeology*.⁵ Other disciplines like history, anthropology and archeometry and Egyptology copied classics and had panels on the topic.

In short, my sociology of knowledge as set out in *Black Athena I*, had been hopelessly crude. In particular my image of classics as monolithic in response to outside threats was completely wrong. Its internal schisms were far more profound than I had thought. There were regional schisms: there was a resentment from scholars based in the South and the Mid-West against the New England domination of the field. Paradoxically there was resentment of the anglophilia of classics. There was also a serious resentment along gender lines. Women complaining that they did most of the teaching and other work while the men were much more free to carry out research and gain academic glory. Women have been disproportionately active both for and against my work. This does not merely show that women are generally more active in the field than men, but that even their attacking me is a form of engagement with my ideas which more traditional or reactionary male scholars are loath to do.

Another thing that I had not anticipated was the collapse of European communism in 1989. This meant that the American right wing lost much of its left wing target and began to pay more attention to the so-called 'culture wars.' These had been relatively unimportant in the nineteen eighties but in the nineteen nineties they now became central. This had an important impact on the reception of *Black Athena*.

Before coming to this, however, I had better discuss Black responses. On the whole, American Blacks have been favourable to my work in that they like to hear somebody who is supposed to be detached, thinking in this way.⁶ On the other hand, there are definite resentments. One is the awareness of the fact that Black scholars had been saying this sort of thing about Egyptian role in the formation of Greece, for a long time and no one paid any attention to them.⁷ They argue convincingly that my receiving this

⁵*Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 3, 1, 1990.

⁶Positive Black reactions include: Duodu, C., 1987, 'The road to Athens from Alexandria', *South* (July) pp. 118-119; Keita, L., 1988, *Présence Africaine*, 145 (Summer): 196-199; Gilroy, P., 1991, 'Classical roots', *Marxism Today* (October): 39; Mudimbe, V.Y., 1992, 'African Athena?' *Transition*, 58: 114-123; Njeri, I., 1991, 'Rocking the cradle of classical civilization', *Los Angeles Times*, 1/2/1991, pp. E1-2; Tate, G., 1989, 'History — The colorized version: Or, everything you learned in school was wrong', *The Village Voice*, 34 (28/3/1989): 48-50.

⁷Diop, C.A., 1955, *Nations nègres et culture de l'antiquité nègre-égyptienne aux problèmes culturels de l'Afrique noire d'aujourd'hui*, Paris: Presence Africaine, 2d ed, first published 1954; Diop, C.A., 1974, *The African origin of civilization: Myth or reality*, Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill; Diop, C.A., 1991, *Civilization or Barbarism: An authentic anthropology*, tr. Y.-L.M. Ngemi, eds. Salemsen, H.J. & de Jager, M., Brooklyn (N.Y.): Lawrence Hill/ Chicago Review Press; James, G.G.M., 1973, *Stolen*

degree of attention was the result of racism. Indeed, in 1987, I had every status card in my hand. I was male, middle aged, white, middle class and British in America. My accent not only made me instantly upper class in the American context, it also gave me a voice of generality, authority and objectivity. I needed every one of these markers to make any headway at all. All this was naturally resented by Afrocentrists and other Black scholars. There is also resentment, e.g. when *Newsweek* had a feature on Afrocentrism showing a picture of me sitting next to the bust of Nefertiti — ‘we are just good friends.’⁸ There was anger that the only two portraits in a section on Afrocentrism should be of two whites.

I have also been attacked by some Afrocentrists and sympathisers with Black Islam who see me as representing one wing of the Jewish conspiracy against Blacks. Mary Lefkowitz is seen as a crude black-basher part, but I am portrayed as a subtle seducer of Afrocentrists away from their cause. For example, Professor Tony Martin, a Black Afrocentrist of Wellesley, wrote⁹ that:

‘if Afrocentrists really read Black Athena they would see there is as much concern with ‘Semites’, and anti-Semitism as there is with Egypt and Africa.’

He is absolutely right. Thus Afrocentrists hold a number of different attitudes towards me and my work.

In 1995, an uncomfortable friend told me that he was contributing to a book of criticisms of my work. Although by that time the project had been going for more than a year I had heard nothing about it. Because by now I had become used to dialogue in journals, books and conferences, I immediately e-mailed the editor, Mary Lefkowitz, writing that I was delighted to hear about this book about my work, and asking when I could see the pieces so that I could respond to them? She wrote back: ‘It has been decided not to have a response from you.’ I wrote back: ‘Why? This is unusual in Academia, because if a book is devoted to a living writer who wants to have a dialogue, it is customary to do so.’ She replied: ‘Most of the pieces have already appeared and you have published responses to them.’ I asked: ‘Are these going to be included in the book?’ ‘No, we have decided not to include them,’ and in fact, three of the contributors were cited as having said they would not contribute if I was allowed to respond. This shocked me although I was somewhat consoled when I heard that

legacy: The Greeks were not the authors of Greek philosophy, but the people of North Africa, commonly called the Egyptians, New York: Philosophical Library; reprinted, San Francisco: Julian Richardson Associates, first published 1954.

⁸Begley, S., Farai Chideya and Larry Wilson, 1991, ‘Out of Egypt Greece’, *Newsweek*, 23/9/1991, pp. 49-50.

⁹Martin, T., 1993, *The Jewish onslaught: Despatches from the Wellesley battlefield*, Dover (Mass.): Majority Press.

two other contributors withdrew when they learnt that I was not being allowed to reply.

The book appeared in the Spring of 1996 with the brilliant title *Black Athena revisited*.¹⁰ It is a compilation of reviews of *Black Athena*, virtually unchanged from the time they were written. So the use of the term 'revisited' which indicates that 'now there is some distance, we can look at it,' is very misleading, because in fact these reviews were written as immediate responses to the volumes. There have been about 30 reviews of *Black Athena* by specialists in the ancient Mediterranean and the majority of these have been clearly hostile. However, over a dozen have been generally sympathetic.¹¹ Now *Black Athena revisited* does not contain any of the sympathetic reviews. It is also interesting that the scholars specifically concerned with interrelations in the Eastern Mediterranean ancient world, particularly those between Egypt and Greece, have written generally favourable reviews: Patricia Bikai, a specialist in Phoenician archaeology,¹² John Ray, an Egyptologist,¹³ and Stanley Burstein, a classicist.¹⁴ George Bass, the leading underwater archaeologist of the Ancient Mediterranean has also declared his unequivocal support for my project.¹⁵ Eric Cline, the American expert in Bronze Age relations between Egypt and the Aegean, was asked to contribute but when he sent in the article the editors decided that 'there wasn't room for it.' He estimates that it is about 10 printed pages long, which would not take up much of a book of some 540 pages. Thus he believes that it was not included because they

¹⁰Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers, *o.c.*

¹¹See: Bowersock, G.W., 1989, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 19: 490-91; Halpern, B., 1991, 'Whose civilization is it anyway?' *The Toronto Star* 24/8/1991, p. 6; Konstan, D., 1988, *Research in African Literatures*, 4 (Winter): 551-554; Myerowitz Levine, M., 1990, 'Classical scholarship: Anti-Black anti-Semitic?' *Bible Review*, 6 (6/1990): 32-36 and 40-41; Malamud, M.A., 1989, *Criticism*, 1: 317-22; Rendsburg, G.A., 1989, 'Black Athena: An etymological response', in: M. Myerowitz Levine & J. Peradotto, eds., *The challenge of 'Black Athena'*, special issue, *Arethusa*, 22: 67-82; Trigger, B., 1992, 'Brown Athena: Postprocessual goddess?' *Current Anthropology*, 2/92: 121-123; Vickers, M., 1987, *Antiquity*, 61 (Nov.): 480-81; Whittaker, C.R., 1988, 'Dark ages of Greece', *British Medical Journal*, 296 (23/4): 1172-1173.

¹²Bikai, P. 1990. 'Black Athena and the Phoenicians,' *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 3.1.(June): 67-76.

¹³Ray, J.D., 1990, 'An Egyptian perspective.' *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 3, 1: 77-81; Ray, J.D., 1991, 'Levant ascendant: The invasion theory of the origins of European civilization', *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 October, pp. 3-4; however, cf. Ray's complete turn around: John Ray, 'How black was Socrates? The roots of European civilization and the dangers of Afrocentrism' (heading on front page) 'The end of *Black Athena*', in the *Times Literary Supplement*. 14/2/97, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴Burstein, S., 1993, Review of *Black Athena II*, *Classical Philology*, 88, 2: 157-62.

¹⁵See 'Responses', in: *Arethusa: The challenge of 'Black Athena'* (Fall 1989): 111-113.

found his piece too favourable to my work.¹⁶

In a way one can view the reviews of the two *Black Athena* volumes in three rings, those written by an inner core of specialists are mixed to favourable, the second ring is very largely unfavourable. The outer ring of non-specialists again is mixed but contains a considerable number of favourable reviews.

Now *Black Athena revisited* has come out and it looks splendid. Its appearance mimics and elaborates that of *Black Athena* itself. The articles make general concessions to my views on historiography as well as on some historical points such as the early dating of wheat exports from the Nile Valley to the Aegean and the economic and political power such trade would have given Egypt. On the other hand, Jasper Griffin wrote a review of *Black Athena revisited* which came out in mid-1996 in the *New York Review of Books* selecting the most hostile sections of the most hostile articles, concluding that everything in *Black Athena* had now been refuted.¹⁷ This is particularly interesting because previously even the hostile reviews have tended to be much more conciliatory. I should not dream of attributing all hostility to my work to a conservative conspiracy. Plenty of political liberals (even socialists) hate it. Nevertheless, it happens that the opposition was galvanised through *Black Athena Revisited* by conservatives, with a political agenda as clear as my own.

I am not quite sure how this is going to affect the situation. Other reviews, such as that by the eminent classicist Glenn Bowersock in the *New York Times* have been much more mixed.¹⁸ In it he expressed some hostility to me but much more to Mary Lefkowitz for the violence of her passion and her leading role in the conservative National Association of Scholars which is attacking the liberal academic establishment to which he belongs. Her little book *Not out of Africa*¹⁹ which appeared almost simultaneously as *Black Athena revisited*, received subsidies from the Bradley and Olin Foundations, in other words from two of the six backers of the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, *The National Review*, and numerous conservative student journals.

I am convinced that *Black Athena revisited* was conceived in

¹⁶Eric Cline has since written a very damning review of *Black Athena revisited* in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, 10/96: 781-782.

¹⁷Griffin, J., 1996, *New York Review of Books*, 20/6/1996, June; cf. his review of *Black Athena I*: Griffin, J. 1989, 'Who are these coming to the sacrifice?', *New York Review of Books*, 15 June, 25-27.

¹⁸Bowersock, G., 'Rescuing the Greeks' [Review of *Black Athena revisited*], *New York Times Book Review*, 25/2/1996, p. 6; cf. Bowersock, G., 1989, Review of *Black Athena I*, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 19: 490-91.

¹⁹Lefkowitz, M.R., 1996, *Not out of Africa: How Afrocentrism became an excuse to teach myth as history*, New York, Basic Book.

conjunction with members of these groups. Thus, where liberal academics had urged me to join in actual or printed symposia, Mary Lefkowitz, the conservative, excluded me, because as she puts it, 'Bernal is wrong.' Her aim is not one of encouraging debate but of stamping out error. This shows a basic misunderstanding of the basic nature and purpose of academia, which is to tease out the 'truth' through discussion and debate. On the other hand many of the contributors to *Black Athena revisited* do not take this illiberal position. They do not see themselves as trying to overthrow multiculturalism but as defending their disciplines and, unlike Mary Lefkowitz, they are willing to debate the issues and have in fact done so; this is true of Baines, Brace, Coleman, O'Connor, Palter, Tritle and Vermeule. I think if you polled them, the majority would vote Democrat or Labour. Thus there has been a merger of academic and political conservatism. To say that someone is an academic conservative in this context, merely means that they want to defend the status quo. They object to what they see as my flouting the methods and rigour with which they have worked and which have undoubtedly secured great achievements for their disciplines. Nevertheless, I argue that in many cases their rigour has been misplaced precision. For instance, the presumption of isolation in a small geographical region like the East Mediterranean over several millennia and the requirement of absolute proof, rather than competitive plausibility of any contact across it, whereas in fact, it would be more surprising if there had not been frequent cultural exchanges.

Indo-European linguistics has been almost exclusively concerned with genetic developments within the language family rather than in contact with other language families. It also has an exaggerated trust in its own reconstructed hypothetical forms. For linguistic loans from West Semitic and Egyptian into Greek there has been an insistence on absolute semantic and phonetic identity and regularity rather than strong similarity, which is all we rightly require from contacts among other languages.

Why should the political conservatives be so concerned? Firstly, there is the Neoconservative myth that there was a pure scholarship until the 1960s when the radicals corrupted it by introducing politics. If the historiographical part of my work is true and that seems to be the least controversial area, it means that politics have been involved in classics from the start. Thereby undermining the Neoconservatives' whole academic 'raison d'être'.

Moreover, there is a visceral dislike of the use made of my work by Afrocentrists. Mary Lefkowitz's *Not out of Africa* is a wild, passionate attack on Afrocentrist ideas, so passionate in fact, that she makes a surprisingly large number of factual historical mistakes. I have pointed some of these out in my review of the book in the April 1996 issue of the

electronic *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*.²⁰ In the much more substantial *Black Athena revisited* she and many of the other contributors have exaggerated or distorted my positions to make it easier to attack.

Let me to go through a number of these distortions.

3. *Distortions of Black Athena's argument in Black Athena revisited*

The first of these is *claim, in Black Athena revisited, that I say the ancient Greeks were black*. This is utterly absurd. I have never questioned the undoubted fact that the Greek population, then as now, has been overwhelmingly 'Mediterranean' in its physiognomy. The only justification for this charge is the title *Black Athena*. But this refers to cultural and not genetic influences. Nevertheless there is no doubt that it has got me into a great deal of trouble. I realised that it would soon after I suggested it, among others, to my publisher Robert Young. I had earlier used 'Black Athena' for shorter articles,²¹ but thought better of it and proposed changing it to *'African Athena.' He insisted on 'Black' because it had a snap to it that 'African Athena' lacked.

The second distortion is *the suggestion that I maintain that Greek is an Afroasiatic language*. This is equally absurd. From the start, I have always insisted that it is fundamentally an Indo-European language but that it has a number of peculiarities that can best be explained as the result of outside influences, predominantly from the Afroasiatic languages and language groups Ancient Egyptian and West Semitic.

The third distortion is slightly less absurd, that is to say, I can see why people came to it. *It is the allegation that I claim Greece to be a projection of Northeast Africa and Southwest Asia*. This is not the case at all. I have always maintained that Greek civilisation was very distinctive. The analogy I have always had in mind has been that of the relationship between China and Japan. The basic Japanese culture and language are unrelated to those of China. On the other hand, you cannot begin to understand Japanese civilisation unless you are aware of its Chinese and Korean origins. Hellenists have been trying to understand their Japan without looking for its China. I do not see Greek civilisation as a mere

²⁰Bernal, M., 1996, Review of *Not out of Africa*, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, Internet journal.

²¹Bernal, M., 1985, 'Black Athena: The African and Levantine roots of Greece', in: van Sertima, I., ed., *African presence in early Europe*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, pp. 66-82; and Bernal, M., 1986, 'Black Athena denied: The tyranny of Germany Over Greece and the rejection of the Afroasiatic roots of Europe: 1780-1980', *Comparative Criticism*, 8, 3: 1-69.

projection but as an original culture that used and adapted many, many things from Northeast Africa and Southwest Asia.

The fourth attack on my work is to *claim that I accept myth uncritically*. This too I deny. I believe that the chief purpose of myths is to explain the world and justify present social and political arrangements. However, to be convincing the myth makers frequently introduce aspects of 'real' history to form a 'bricolage.' Teasing out these different threads is much more difficult. There are various crude techniques such as removing world wide folk motifs such as fifty sisters marrying fifty brothers and discarding stories that violate common experience such as Herodotus' claim²² that the Indians had black semen. Even after that, I insist that mythological claims should be corroborated by evidence from other sources such as archaeology, linguistics and cult. Nevertheless, I think that myths can be useful in reconstructing the past as working hypotheses to be tested against other sources of information.

The fifth distortion is my supposed complete dismissal of modern scholarship. However, as e.g. Wim van Binsbergen has pointed out,²³ *Black Athena* is built on modern scholarship. However, I have often taken the works of scholars who are not considered today to be at the centre of their fields. For instance, I have a deep admiration for some of the late 19th century and early 20th century scholars such as Arthur Evans and Eduard Meyer who has been damned for his violently anti-English writings during the first World War. I have an enormous respect for Gordon Childe.²⁴ My other heroes alive today are Michael Astour, Walter Burkert, Cyrus Gordon, Joseph Greenberg, Sarah Morris, Donald Redford, Oswald Szemerényi, Peter Walcot, and Martin West.²⁵ I also

²²Herodotus, Book III. 101.

²³Wim van Binsbergen, 'Black Athena Ten Years After: Towards a constructive re-assessment' (this volume); cf. Wim van Binsbergen, 1996, 'Black Athena and Africa's contribution to global cultural history', *Quest — Philosophical Discussions: An International African Journal of Philosophy*, 9, 2 and 10, 1: 100-137.

²⁴Evans, A.E., 1921-35, *The Palace of Minos*, 4 vols in 6, London: Macmillan; Evans, A., 1909, *Scripta Minoa*, Oxford: Clarendon; Meyer, E., 1892, *Forschungen zur alten Geschichte*, 2 vols, Halle: Niemeyer; Meyer, E., 1921, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums, II. Die Entwicklung des Judentums und Jesus von Nazaret*, Stuttgart & Berlin: Cotta; Meyer, E., 1928-1936, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 3. ed., Berlin/Stuttgart: Cotta, 4 vols; Childe, V.G., 1926, *The Aryans*, London: Kegan Paul; Childe, V.G., 1949, *The Danube in prehistory*, 2nd ed., London: Oxford University Press; Childe, V.G., 1958, *A new light on the ancient Middle East*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

²⁵Astour, M. C., 1967, *Hellenosemitica: An ethnic and cultural study in West Semitic impact on Mycenaean Greece*, Leiden: Brill; Burkert, W., 1984, 'Die orientalisierende Epoche in der griechischen Religion und Literatur', *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften*, philosophisch-historische Klasse I. (translated as *The orientalizing revolution: Near Eastern influence on Greek culture in*

admire scholars with whom I often disagree, such as Martin Nilsson, my grandfather Alan Gardiner, and Colin Renfrew.²⁶ Men with extremely stimulating ideas. It is simply not the case that I dismiss the ideas of 'anybody who had the misfortune to be born after 1750' as has been claimed by two authors²⁷ in *Black Athena revisited* to whom I shall come back below.

Another charge made in *Black Athena revisited* as well as by Josine Blok,²⁸ is that my historiographical view is so crude as to be useless because I fail to deal with countervailing forces. For instance, according to Robert Palter,²⁹ while there was racism in the 18th century there was also anti-racism, and later, while there was isolationism there was also diffusionism. It is absolutely true that nearly every trend creates a counter trend but this does not mean that they are equally powerful or influential. There seems to me an interesting convergence here between academic

the Early Archaic Age, Cambridge, Mass. and London, Harvard University Press, 1992; Burkert, W., 1985, *Greek Religion*, J. Raffan trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; and Oxford: Blackwell; Burkert, W., 1987, *Ancient mystery cults*, Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press; Gordon, C., 1955, 'Homer and the Bible', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 26: 43-108; Gordon, C., 1962, *Before the Bible: The common background of Greek and Hebrew civilizations*, New York: Harper & Row; Gordon, C., 1965, *Ugaritic textbook*, Analecta Orientalia 18. Rome: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum; Gordon, C., 1971, *Forgotten scripts: The story of their decipherment*, London: Penguin. Greenberg, J., 1955, *Studies in African linguistic classification*, New Haven: Compass Press; Greenberg, J., 1986, 'Were there Egyptian koines?' pp. 271-290 in *The Fergusonian impact in honor of Charles A. Ferguson on the occasion of his 65th Birthday*, vol. I, eds. Joshua A. Fishman, Andrée Tabouret-Keller, Michael Clyne, Bh. Krishnamurti, Mohamed Abduaziz. Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton, De Gruyter; Morris, S. P., 1992, *Daidalos and the origins of Greek art*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Redford, D., 1992, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Walcot, P., 1966, *Hesiod and the Near East*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press; West, M. L., 1971, *Early Greek philosophy and the orient*, Oxford: Clarendon; West, M. L., 1988, *Hesiod Theogony*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²⁶Nilsson, M.P., 1972, *The Mycenaean origin of Greek mythology*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, first published 1932; Nilsson, M.P., 1950, *The Minoan-Mycenaean religion and its survival in Greek religion*, Lund: Gleerup, 2nd impr.; Gardiner, A.H., 1927, *Egyptian grammar*, Oxford: Clarendon; Gardiner, A.H., 1947, *Ancient Egyptian onomastica, Bd. 1-3*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Gardiner, A.H., 1957, *Egyptian grammar, 3d ed.*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Gardiner, A.H., 1961, *Egypt of the pharaohs*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Renfrew, C., 1972, *The emergence of civilisation: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the third millennium B. C.*, London: Methuen & Co.; Renfrew, C. 1987, *Archaeology and language: The puzzle of Indo-European origins*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

²⁷Jasanoff, J.H., & Nussbaum, A., 1996, 'Word games: The linguistic evidence in *Black Athena*', in: Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers, *o.c.*, pp. 177-205; p. 177.

²⁸Josine H. Blok, 'Proof and persuasion in *Black Athena I*: The case of K.O. Müller' (this volume).

²⁹Palter, R., 1996, '*Black Athena*, Afrocentrism, and the history of science', in: Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers, *o.c.*, pp. 209-266.

conservatism and post-modernism. If you choose to see the situation as too complicated, subtle and shifting to describe, you leave the status quo untouched. I am convinced that in most situations there is hierarchy of forces. For instance anti-racism was not as powerful as racism in Europe and North America in the 18th and 19th centuries.

I agree that we should not set up schemes that miss crucial dimensions of a given social or intellectual situation. For instance, Marxism is too crude to capture the complex reality of modern society. On the other hand, I am convinced that truth is more likely to come from error than from confusion. One should make hypotheses even while being aware that these are oversimplifications. I use the word 'model' to mean 'reduction of reality' Although this inevitably entails a loss of subtlety it is absolutely essential for coherent thought because the only full representation of reality is the one-to-one map, which is as confusing as the original.

A seventh distortion which comes out very strongly in *Black Athena revisited* is the claim that essentially I only consider African 'roots,' and that I am not really talking about Asian ones. This is the opposite of the Afrocentrist criticism, mentioned above, that I emphasise Semitic influences on the formation of Ancient Greece rather than the Egyptian or African ones; the latter criticism is in fact more perceptive, because I do believe Southwest Asia had an extraordinary important impact on Greece. The only invasion of Greece that I am inclined to accept is one by the Hyksos who were undoubtedly Southwest Asians, although I believe with the Ancients that they were introducing aspects of Egyptian culture. They may also have introduced the alphabet. I have written a book on the alphabet³⁰ which hardly mentions Egypt and deals exclusively with the Levant and the spread from there to Greece and beyond. I have also published two articles³¹ on the role of Phoenician cities as models for a *polis* of ancient Greece. It is totally impossible to derive these from centralised Pharaonic Egypt. On the other hand, the Phoenician maritime mercantile states look remarkably like the Greek city states; the former developed several centuries earlier and we know from archaeological evidence³² there were close relations between the Levant and the Aegean during the relevant period (950-750 BCE).

³⁰Bernal, M., 1990, *Cadmean letters: The transmission of the alphabet to the Aegean and further west before 1400 B.C.*, Winona Lake (Ind.): Eisenbrauns.

³¹Bernal M., 1989, 'First by land, then by sea: Thoughts about the social formation of the Mediterranean and Greece' pp. 3-33 in: E.D. Genovese and L. Hochberg, eds., *Geographic perspectives in history: Essays in honour of Edward Whiting Fox*, Oxford: Blackwell; Bernal, M., 1993, 'Phoenician politics and Egyptian justice in Ancient Greece', in: Raaflaub, K., ed., *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike: Die nah-östlichen Kulturen und die Griechen*, Munich: Oldenbourg, pp. 241-61.

³²For many references to this, see Sarah Morris, *Daidalos*, pp. 123-149.

Let me dwell on the term 'Afroasiatic' a bit more, since it is central to my argument in *Black Athena*.

4. African dynamics: Afroasiatic as a key term

I have used 'Afroasiatic' in a double sense. Both as representing the two continents Africa and Asia and in the technical sense: the term invented by Joseph Greenberg³³ as the name of the language super-family that includes both Ancient Egyptian and Semitic. Thus it provided the lowest common denominator that included the cultures and languages of Egypt and the Levant. I do not think that I should have used the term 'Afrasian' as introduced by the linguist A.B. Dolgopolsky and subsequently taken up by the great Russian linguist and Ancient Historian I.M. Diakonoff, intended to stress the African basis of the language family and to play down the Asiatic one.³⁴ The earlier insistence on the Asiatic aspect comes from our looking at the super-family through Semitic which is largely found in southwest Asia, though I follow those scholars³⁵ who maintain that Semitic itself originated in what is today Ethiopia. Whether or not this is the case, I accept the consensus that Afroasiatic began in Africa, either in the Ethiopian Rift or in the Upper Nile, a region mainly inhabited by Nilo-Saharan speakers. There is no doubt that if Afroasiatic came from the south, then the Egyptian language came from that direction. Furthermore, we know that Upper Egypt conquered Lower Egypt and that before unification there were Nubian influences on Upper Egypt, as there were at various later periods, notably in the 1st millennium BCE.

³³Greenberg, J.H., 1952, 'The Afro-Asiatic (Hamito-Semitic) Present,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 72: 1-9.

³⁴Dolgopolsky, A.B., 1973, *Sravniteljno-istoričkaja Fonetika Kušitikič Jazykov*. Moscow: Nauka; Diakonoff, I.M., 1965, *Semito-Hamitic languages*, Moscow: Nauka; For a discussion, see: Christopher Ehret, 1995, *Reconstructing proto-Afroasiatic(Proto-Afrasian) vowels, tone, consonants, and vocabulary*, Berkeley: University Press Linguistics vol. 126, pp. 1-2, n. 1.

³⁵Bender L., 1975, *Omotic: A New Afroasiatic Language Family*, Carbondale: University Museum Studies. p. 221; Demoz, A. 1978 'Ethiopian Origins: A Survey,' *Abbay: Documents pour servir à l'histoire de la civilisation éthiopienne*, ed. J. Chavallan, Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique. pp. 11-14; Diakonoff, I. M., 1965, *Semito-Hamitic languages*, Moscow: Nauka p. 10, n. 1; Flemming, H.C., 1968 'Ethiopic language, history: Hypotheses in an archaeological and documentary context', *Ethnohistory*, 15, 4: 353-387; Hetzron, R., 1975, 'Genetic classification and Ethiopian Semitic', in: Bynon, J., and Bynon, T., eds., *Hamito-Semitic* (Janua Linguarum Series Practica 200), The Hague: Mouton, pp. 103-127, p. 112; Hudson, G., 1977, 'Language Classification and the Semitic Prehistory of Ethiopia', *Folia Orientalia*, 18: 119-166; Murtonen, A., 1967, *Early Semitic: A diachronical inquiry into the relationship of Ethiopic to the other so-called South-East Semitic languages*, Leiden: Brill.

There is a problem in that Afroasiatic appears to be very distant indeed from the other Northern African language families, i.e. Nilo-Saharan and Niger-Congo. However, we have to appreciate, in general, the tremendous variety of every aspect of humanity in Africa. On the genetic side, there is no doubt that there is more variety in Africa than in the rest of the world put together. The reason for this is, very simply, that people have lived there much longer than elsewhere and have had more time to diversify in Africa. Speaking personally as a complete outsider, for some time I have hesitated before accepting the 'Eve Hypothesis' put forward by geneticists,³⁶ according to which modern humans migrated from Africa 100,000 years ago. It is based on evidence from mitochondrial DNA. Against this, there is the scheme of 'A rising tide raises all boats' proposed by paleoanthropologists who have argued that the diffusion from Africa picked up by the geneticists was that of *Homo erectus* approximately 800,000 years ago and that modern humanity or *Homo sapiens sapiens* arose much later all over the Old World. Now, however, there is a whole new set of genetic evidence not using mitochondrial but nuclear DNA, which backs the 'Eve Hypothesis'.³⁷ Thus it seems very likely that modern people spread from Africa relatively recently, roughly 100,000 years ago.

This affects the question of the physical anthropology of the Ancient Egyptians. The new genetic evidence indicates that the prototype of the world's non-African population came from Northeast Africa. There is ample reason to assume that the physical type of *Homo sapiens sapiens* as spreading across the world from Northeast Africa had much in common with what we find today among people identifying as Somalis, Agau, Falasha. The genetic patterns of these contemporary peoples seems to be intermediate between central and southern Africa and the rest of the world. It is this population that appears to have been the basis of the Nubian and Upper Egyptian populations in Predynastic and early Dynastic Egypt. So when I use the word 'black' I do not mean stereotypical West or Central African. However, it is interesting to note the earlier lack of objections to

³⁶For general surveys for this debate, with a substantial bibliographies see: Brown, M. H., *The search for Eve*, New York: Harper and Row, 1990; and: Fagan, B. M., *The journey for Eden: The peopling of our world*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1990.

³⁷Tishkoff, S.A., Dietzsch, E., Speed, W., Pakstis, A.J., Cheung, K., Kidd, J.R., Bonne-Tarnir, B., Santachiara-Benerecetti, A.S., Moral, P., Watson, E., Krings, M., Paabo, S., Risch, N., Jenkins, T., and Kidd, K.K., 'Global patterns of linkage disequilibrium at the CD4 locus and modern human origins.' *Science* 271, 8 March 1996: 1380-1387. See also: Armour, J.A.L., Anttinen, T., May, C.A., Vega, E.E., Sagantila, A, Kidd, J.R., Kidd, K.K., Bertranpetit, J., Paabo, S., and Jeffries, A.J.; 'Mini Satellite Diversity supports a recent African origin for modern humans', *Nature Genetics*, 13, 1996: 154-160.

the portrayal of Egyptians as 'white' while there is outrage at the recent publicity given to the notion of their being represented as 'black.' The Ancient Egyptian population was mixed, and both West African and Southwest Asian types were present from early times but its basis was North East African.

The same is true of language. As I said earlier, I believe that Afroasiatic began to the South of Egypt and that Egyptian is fundamentally a Afroasiatic language.³⁸ However, there are anomalies. Initially, I was extraordinarily suspicious of the proposal made by Cheikh Anta Diop³⁹ that there was a pan-African language family and of his claim that the similarities he saw between Egyptian and his own native language Wolof, derived from this common root. I suspected it firstly because I accepted Joseph Greenberg's classification of African languages into four distinct families and secondly because of the well-known principle that historical linguists tend to project their own mother tongue onto the proto-language of the family.

Now, however, while I still do not believe that there is a single pan-African language family, I am open to some of his specific suggestions of connections between Wolof and Ancient Egyptian. This is because I have learnt that Wolof is a particularly archaic member of the Niger-Congo language family. For instance, it shares noun classes with Bantu (but not with the intermediate languages). If one accepts the increasingly widespread view that Niger-Congo is merely a branch of the much more ancient and varied Nilo-Saharan, it is reasonable to suppose that languages with features preserved in Wolof were spoken in the Sahara when much of it was savanna during the Holocene.

The majority of the people represented in the rock paintings of this period resemble in physical appearance and possibly in their rituals, the modern Fulani, whose language, like Wolof, belongs to the same Senegambian branch of the Atlantic family of Niger-Congo.

For many years it has been clear that one element in the population of the Nile Valley in the Predynastic period (5000-3400 BCE) came from the Sahara as it began to desiccate. The Egyptian archaeologist and

³⁸See: Blench, R., 1993, 'Recent developments in language classification and their implications for prehistory,' in Shaw, T., Sinclair, P., Andah, B., and Okupo, T., eds., *The archaeology of Africa*, New York: Routledge, pp. 126-137. The leading African historical linguist C. Ehret places the *Urheimat* along the Red Sea Coast in the Eastern Sudan, 'Ancient Egyptian as an African language, Egypt as an African culture' in: Celenko, T., ed., *Egypt in Africa*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996, pp. 25-27. In a personal communication (Miami 23/3/97) he was perfectly willing to accept my proposed *Urheimat* in Southern Ethiopia.

³⁹Diop, C. A., *Parenté génétique de l'égyptien pharaonique et des langues négro-africaines*, IFAN-NEA 1977.

prehistorian Fekhri Hassan⁴⁰ is only the latest in a long series of scholars to show that these elements had a significant impact on Predynastic material culture. Thus it would seem plausible to suppose that there was linguistic mixture too and that some of the features of Ancient Egyptian that cannot be explained in terms of Afroasiatic may well come from Nilo-Saharan or even specifically from Niger-Congo.⁴¹

So genetically, culturally and linguistically I believe that the early Upper Egyptians were basically East African with a Central African admixture and Lower Egyptians were North African with East African and South West Asian elements. Virtually no scholar today⁴² accepts the idea any more of a 'dynastic race' arriving in Egypt from or through Southwest Asia. After the Pharaonic unification of Egypt or at least, after the foundation of the Old Kingdom there was a standardisation of much of material culture. There was also considerable genetic mixing of the upper

⁴⁰Hassan, F., 1988, 'The Predynastic of Egypt,' *Journal of World Prehistory*, 2: 135-185.

⁴¹For the borrowing of agricultural terms from Nilo-Saharan into Egyptian see: C. Ehret, 'Ancient Egyptian as an African Language, Egypt as an African Culture,' T. Celenko, ed., *Egypt in Africa*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996, pp. 25-27.

⁴²W. B. Emery writing in the 1950s wrote 'Modern scholars have tended to ignore the possibility of conquest and immigration...', Emery, W.B., *Archaic Egypt: Culture and civilization in Egypt five thousand years ago*, London: Penguin, 1961. p. 31. Although he clearly sympathised with the notion he agreed that it was unfashionable. For arguments against a dynastic race see also Michael Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, New York: Knopf, 1979, pp. 291-293; Yurco, F.J., 1996, 'Black Athena: An Egyptological review', in: Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers, *o.c.*, p. 62-100, p. 63. On Naqada II material: Brace, C.L., 1996, Brace, C. L., D. P. Tracer, L. A. Yaroch, J. Robb, K. Brandt, and A. R. Nelson, 1996, 'Clines and clusters versus 'race': A test in Ancient Egypt and the case of a death on the Nile', in: Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers, *o.c.*, pp. 129-164, pp. 140-141 attacks Petrie's assessment of it as an indication of a 'New Race'; cf. S. Keita, 'Studies of ancient crania from Northern Africa', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 83, 1990: 35-48, p. 46 concludes that both Badari and Naqada I and Naqada II classified together, overlap with the Nubian series from Kerma. See also: A.C. Berry and R.J. Berry 'Origins and relationships of the Ancient Egyptians, based on the study of non-metrical variations in the skull', *Journal of Human Evolution*, 1, 1972: 199-206, p. 203; and G. Robins and C. Shute, 'Predynastic Egyptian stature and physical proportions', *Journal of Human Evolution*, 4, 1986: 313-324. There does seem to have been a greater variety in the upper class population of Naqada II but this is generally seen as including both Upper and Lower Egyptian (North African) elements which would fit with the increased power and centralisation of Upper Egypt. See: Keita, S., 'Studies and comments on Ancient Egyptian biological relationships', *History in Africa*, 20, 1993: 129-154. The undoubted Mesopotamian contacts with, and cultural influences on, Predynastic Egypt, which may date back to Naqada II, even if accompanied by Uruk colonies at Buto and elsewhere in the Delta, do not form a Dynastic Race. Kingship was clearly established in Upper Egypt and Nubia, while the few settlements excavated from that period in Lower Egypt indicate a much less stratified society, (see Hoffman, *Egypt Before the pharaohs*, pp. 191-199) and it was Upper Egypt that conquered Lower Egypt not vice versa.

classes of Upper and Lower Egypt. However, the populations as wholes remained relatively distinct and even today people become increasingly pale and Mediterranean-looking as one goes down the Nile. Although dialects developed from time to time and place to place there was a general homogenisation of the disparate Afroasiatic and other sources to create a standard Egyptian language.

5. *Language contact and the formation of the Greek language*

Now for the formation of the Greek language. Here I rely on the new 'bible' of language contact, *Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics* by Sarah Grey Thomason and Terrence Kaufman.⁴³ In it, they emphasize the sensible and obvious point that there is a difference between language shift and language contact. In the first case people give up their language to take on another, in the second they merely accept linguistic features from another language. When one is trying to reconstruct the linguistic past without the aid of other than linguistic sources, useful indications of what may have taken place can be gained from analysing which aspects of the language have changed. Languages can usefully be seen to have what the Dutch linguist Frans van Coetsem has called a 'stability gradient'. As he puts it:

'vocabulary (is) the least stable language domain and phonology and grammar (morphology and syntax) the more stable ones.'⁴⁴

Thus language contact usually affects vocabulary, while after language shift the speakers of the supplanted language tend to retain their phonology and syntax. An example of this can be seen in the English spoken in Ireland, where virtually no Irish words survive but the phonology and syntax remain heavily influenced by the original language.

Now proponents of the Aryan Model of Greek origins maintain that the Greek language is the result of a conquest by Indo-European speaking Hellenes of the non-Indo-European speaking 'Pre-Hellenes'. Thus, they see the Greek language as the result of a shift in which the 'Pre-Hellenes' abandoned their language to accept that of their conquerors. The difficulty with this scheme is that after this postulated language shift, the theoretically most stable domains phonology and syntax have become thoroughly Indo-European, it is the vocabulary that is odd in retaining what have traditionally been recognised as non-standard ('Pelasgian')

⁴³Thomason, S. Grey, & Kaufman, T., 1988, *Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁴⁴van Coetsem, F., 1988, *Loan phonology and the two transfer types in language contact*, Dordrecht: Foris, p. 26.

elements. This is very different from another language which is generally agreed to be the result of conquest by Indo-European speakers or Aryans over non-Indo-European speakers: Sanskrit. In this case the vocabulary has become overwhelmingly Indo-European and the phonology continues to fit that of the Dravidian family still flourishing in Southern India and probably⁴⁵ spoken by the pre-Aryans at the time of the Aryan conquest. Thus the conquered Dravidian speakers yielded the least stable language domain but retained the most stable.

There are a few cases going against this trend: where people have retained their vocabulary but lost their syntax and phonology. This can be seen for instance in English-Romany where the Romany vocabulary has become a jargon or a code that can be used by gypsies but embedded in completely English syntax and phonetics. I had better be careful here but in a way you could say that French Canadian is going along the same path. Could it be that the 'pre-Hellenes' preserved their vocabulary while they took on the syntax and phonology? This seems very unlikely, because the basic vocabularies as determined by the Swadesh or Greenberg list of a 100 fundamental words, has a significantly higher proportion of Indo-European roots than the rest of the vocabulary. There is, in fact, a stark contrast in Greek between the Indo-European component of less than 40% of the total vocabulary as opposed to the 79% I have found in the shorter 100 word list of basic items drawn up by the linguist Morris Swadesh.⁴⁶

From my English point of view I would say that the Indo-European aspects of Greek greatly resemble the Anglo-Saxon aspects of English: the latter have catered for phonology and fundamental words, while the sophisticated vocabulary has come largely from French, Latin and Greek. The Anglo-Saxons did not abandon their language, they merely underwent massive language contact. Thus, the analogies strongly support the argument that Greek is not the result of language shift but of substantial language contact. If Greek is the result of language shift it is typologically unique. If one concedes that it is the result of contact not shift then by far the most likely sources of influence are the two dominant languages in the East Mediterranean during the 2nd millennium, Egyptian and West Semitic. It is conceivable that other lost languages were involved but these should only be invoked once one has exhausted the obvious and known sources, which for ideological reasons has been far from the case. This

⁴⁵The evidence is amply set out in: Parpola, A., 1994, *Deciphering the Indus script*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁶For the less than 40% see: Anna Morpurgo-Davies 'The Linguistic Evidence', pp. 93-123 in G. Cadogan, ed., *The end of the Early Bronze Age in the Aegean*, Leiden: Brill, 1986, p. 105. For the Swadesh list see: Morris Swadesh, *The origin and diversification of language*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971, pp. 271-284.

would make Greek belong to the most common class of languages resulting from contact, a class comprising such languages as English, Vietnamese, Japanese and Swahili. In all these cases the structure of the language has remained the native one but the vocabulary has been massively influenced from the outside.

Having said this, I believe that there are one or two morphological features in Greek not found elsewhere in Indo-European that can plausibly be derived from West Semitic or Egyptian. Saul Levin has pointed out that the oblique dual *-oiin/-aiin* in Greek looks very much like the Semitic dual *-ayim*.⁴⁷ The Greek suffix is unique in Indo-European in that the genitive and dative have the same forms. Similarly the suffix *-eus* (in e.g. *hals* 'sea', cf. *haleus* 'one who has to do with the sea, fisherman'; *hippos* 'horse,' cf. *hippeus* 'horseman, charioteer'; *phonos* 'murder', cf. *phoneus* 'murderer') resembles the Egyptian participial final *-w*, which is described by James Hoch⁴⁸ and Antonio Loprieno⁴⁹ as the 'one who does'. The fit is made still tighter by the fact that in many contexts the Egyptian *w* became *eu* towards the end of the second millennium.

There has been relatively little public attention paid to my linguistic claims, although I am sure of that many classicists and their friends have been shaking their heads and saying 'nonsense, nonsense.' Until 1996 there had only been two articles on my linguistic claims. One, generally favourable, was by the Semitist Gary Rendsburg who also knows Egyptian and Greek.⁵⁰ The other one was by John Ray, an Egyptologist.⁵¹ Ray though sympathetic,⁵² was rather more critical.⁵³

Outside the specialist fields I have found that many people wonder 'what is so unnatural or peculiar in neighbouring language influencing each other?' If these had been American languages and African languages, linguists would naturally be looking for parallels or loans and would not be surprised to find them. However, Greek and Hebrew are in their

⁴⁷S. Levin, *The Indo-European and Semitic languages*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971, pp. 34-115; and S. Levin, *Semitic and Indo-European: The principal etymologies*, Current issues in linguistic theory, 129, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company 1995, pp. 14-16 and 29.

⁴⁸Hoch, J., 1995, *Middle Egyptian grammar*, Mississauga: Benben Publications, Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities, publication XV, p. 168.

⁴⁹Loprieno, A., 1995, *Ancient Egyptian*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.86.

⁵⁰Rendsburg, G.A., 1989, 'Black Athena: An etymological response', in: Myerowitz Levine, M., & Peradotto, J., eds., *The Challenge of Black Athena*, special issue, *Arethusa*, 22, 1: 67-82.

⁵¹Ray, 1990, *o.c.*

⁵²See his review of *Black Athena II*: Ray, 1991, *o.c.*

⁵³Two other reviews were published in a linguistic context yet did not specifically touch on my linguistic claims: Aune, J., 1993, Review of *Black Athena II*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 79: 119-22; Burstein, *o.c.*

different ways the sacred languages of Western culture and therefore there is an irrational feeling that they should not be treated in the same way as other languages are.

While Mary Lefkowitz and her co-editor Guy Rogers were generally able to find sufficiently hostile reviews to aid their purpose of discrediting me, this was not the case with language. Therefore, they commissioned a new one from my two colleagues at Cornell, professors Jay Jasanoff and Alan Nussbaum.⁵⁴ They are trained Indo-Europeanists. They have some knowledge of Semitic but no knowledge of Egyptian at all. And as proud adherents of the nineteenth-century Neogrammarian tradition,⁵⁵ — as ‘regularists’, to use a term invented by Robert Hall, their older colleague at Cornell — they have virtually no concern with language contact.

The Neogrammarians, who flourished between 1870 and 1900, were very much part of the 19th century. Their method was based on Comte’s positivism and their models came from Lyell’s ‘uniformitarian’ geology. This projected onto the past processes observable in the present and emphasised steady progress and regularity. For the Neogrammarians, linguistics was linguistic history and linguistic history was that of the Indo-European ‘family.’ These German scholars maintained that every aspect of language change could be explained rationally by ‘the exceptionlessness of sound laws’ (*‘Ausnahmlosigkeit der Lautgesetze’*). This approach has generally been very successful, and together with analogies from developments in other words, the ‘laws’ are able to explain 70-90% of cases.

There are, however, significant limitations. Jasanoff and Nussbaum admit that these ‘laws’ are not universal but ‘language-specific’.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the ‘laws’ always leave an unexplained or inexplicable ‘residue,’ a point not mentioned by Jasanoff and Nussbaum, who imply that there is complete conformity.⁵⁷

The Neogrammarians focused exclusively on Indo-European and paid no attention to its possible contacts with other languages apart from those arising from, what they called ‘the substrate’, using a geological model. These were the real or supposed influences from the non-Indo-European languages of peoples conquered by Indo-European speakers. The absence of outside interests is easy to explain. Firstly, because living in an intensely Romantic age, the Neogrammarians believed in the creative

⁵⁴Jasanoff & Nussbaum, *o.c.*

⁵⁵See: Frans van Coetsem, 1994, *The vocalism of the Germanic parent language: Systemic evolution and sociohistorical context*, Heidelberg: Winter 1994, pp. 32-33.

⁵⁶Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p. 181.

⁵⁷Robert A. Hall, 1949, ‘Terminological notes’, *Studies in Linguistics*, 1949. pp. 58-62.

power of purity and the overriding importance of internal developments. Although they denounced the 'organicism' or biological analogies used by some of their predecessors,

'they continued to treat language as a "thing" independent of the speaker and his social context,'⁵⁸

and 'independent things' do not mix. Secondly, as the Neogrammarians saw the Indo-Europeans as the most dynamic people in history, they did not believe that their languages could have been substantially influenced by those of the less active. Thirdly, study of contact confuses the image of geologically slow developments because it can lead to acceleration and even worse, to irregularity.

Like their academic forefathers, Jasanoff and Nussbaum focus almost exclusively on Indo-European and much of their review is devoted to rehearsing the traditional and plausible historical reconstructions of developments within language families and in Indo-European in particular. They too, devote relatively little space to theories of language contact especially that between unrelated or only distantly related languages. This may seem surprising given the topic of their review but it is natural in light of the tradition within which they are working.

Walter Burkert the leading modern authority on Greek religion, has written on this spirit as it affects Greek:

'Greek linguistics has been the domain of Indo-Europeanists for nearly two centuries; yet its success threatens to distort reality. In all the standard lexicons, to give the etymology of a Greek word means *per definitionem* to give an Indo-European etymology. Even the remotest references — say, to Armenian or Lithuanian — are faithfully recorded; possible borrowings from the Semitic, are judged uninteresting and either discarded or mentioned only in passing, without adequate documentation. It is well known that a large part of the Greek vocabulary lacks any adequate Indo-European etymology; but it has become the fashion to prefer connections with a putative Aegean substratum or with Anatolian parallels, which involves dealing with largely unknown spheres instead of pursuing connections with well known Semitic languages. Beloch even wanted to separate the Rhodian Zeus Atabyrios from Mount Atabyrion = Tabor, the mountain in Palestine, in favour of vague Anatolian resonances. Anti-Semitism was manifest in this case; elsewhere it was often operating at an unseen level. Even first-rank Indo-Europeanists have made astonishing misjudgements...'⁵⁹

Burkert's description rightly draws attention to this widespread tendency in traditional historical linguistics to use the model of a ramifying tree rather than a complex lattice or mangrove and to insist on self-generating developments within languages or language families rather than

⁵⁸Konrad Koerner, 1989, *Practicing linguistic historiography*, Studies in the history of language sciences 50. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989, p. 94.

⁵⁹Burkert, 1992, p. 34.

considering sociolinguistics and being open to the possibility or likelihood of outside influences.⁶⁰

Jasanoff and Nussbaum have also taken on the Germanic tradition of absolute academic authority which is maintained by using ponderous humour and pouring withering scorn on any new ideas. Above all they employ 'reductio ad absurdum'. For instance, there is their claim⁶¹ that to believe that there are Egyptian and Semitic loans in Greek is as absurd as accepting the scheme proposed by H. Frey⁶² almost a century ago that 'Annamite' is the origin of all languages. Such techniques appear throughout their article.

Let me take one or two examples to illustrate their approach. Jasanoff and Nussbaum attack my derivation of *kudos* from the Semitic root *qds* 'sacred' and my definition of it as 'divine glory', and claim that it 'simply means "renown"'.⁶³ It is true that this is what one finds in the standard dictionary of Liddell & Scott.⁶⁴ However, if one checks on its use in the epics one discovers something rather different as the etymological lexicographer Pierre Chantraine put it:⁶⁵

'force magique, rayonnement de la force... une divinité donne le *kudos* à un guerrier... à un roi...'

The word clearly possessed a divine and magical aspect. Thus the semantic fit between the Semitic and the Greek word is excellent. The phonetic correspondence is also good, since Gary Rendsburg has pointed out that the Canaanite proto-form should be constructed as **quds*.⁶⁶

Jasanoff & Nussbaum moreover object⁶⁷ that the word cannot be a loan because the variations *kudro-* and *kudi-* are the result of an archaic set of Proto-Indo-European derivational rules known as Caland's Law, which early ceased to operate and 'virtually always' applied to direct inheritances from Proto-Indo-European. There is a wonderful irony here as Nussbaum's Ph.D thesis⁶⁸ was a deconstruction of Caland's Law in

⁶⁰This tendency is discussed in Grey Thomason & Kaufman, pp. 1-2: 'Phrygian' in English.

⁶¹Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p. 202.

⁶²Frey, H., 1905, *Les Egyptiens préhistoriques identifiés avec les Annamites d'après les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques*, Paris: Hachette.

⁶³Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p. 196.

⁶⁴Liddell, H.G., & R. Scott, 1968, *A Greek-English lexicon*, ed. H.S. Jones with R. McKenzie, with a supplement, Oxford: Clarendon, reprint of the 1940 9th ed.

⁶⁵Chantraine, P., 1968-75, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, 4 vols., Paris: Klincksieck.

⁶⁶Rendsburg, p.77

⁶⁷Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p.196.

⁶⁸Alan J. Nussbaum, 'Caland's "Law" and the Caland system', Ph.D. thesis presented to the Department of Linguistics, Harvard, January, 1976.

which he demonstrated how inconsistent and difficult it is to date the changes known under this heading. In fact there are a number of alternations *C/ Cr* and *C/ Ci* in cases that are clearly loans. They end by stating that there is a clear cognate in the Old Church Slavonic *čudo* ‘wonder, marvel’, proposing this goes against their earlier claim that *kudos* had nothing magical about it. Chantraine, however agrees ‘that the sense leads one to accept’ the cognicity but the vocalisation does not allow it:

‘Le sens invite à rapprocher le v. sl. *čudo* ...mais le mot sl. supposerait un vocalisme **qeu*.’

6. Greek etymologies from Semitic and Egyptian

At this point I should like to propose a few Greek etymologies from Semitic and Egyptian. In the case of the examples from Semitic I have avoided those that are found in Emilia Maçon’s work⁶⁹ or are of luxuries or material objects, which are acceptable to scholars working in the Aryan Model. I have also restricted the list to words found in Hesiod, Homer or Mycenaean texts.

The Semitic root *>rg*, ‘weave’ attested in both Phoenician and Hebrew appears not only in the Greek *arkus* ‘net’ for which the lexicographer Pierre Chantraine provided no Indo-European etymology but also in *arakhne* ‘spider’ which Chantraine derives from *arkus*. Both the semantic and the phonetic correspondences are very good. The rendering of *aleph* as a prothetic *a-* and the *resh* as *rho* are obvious and the Semitic *gimel* was frequently borrowed as *kappa* as in the loan from the lexical item *gimel* itself into *kamēlos*.

The Semitic *>rḥ* found in the Akkadian *arāḫū* ‘hurry, haste’ and *erēḫū* ‘advance aggressively,’ the Soqotri *>eraḥ* ‘come, arrive’ and the Hebrew *>araḥ* ‘travel’ and *>orḥa* ‘caravan’. In Greek there is the verb *erxomai* only used in the present, meaning ‘come, go, march’. Chantraine writes about this: ‘pas d’étymologie assurée.’

There is a secondary meaning of the Semitic root *gwr* found in the Hebrew *gūr* and *gōr* meaning ‘whelps of lions or jackals’ In Greek there is the religious term *gauros* meaning ‘proud’ but with specific reference to the *ephebes* or adolescent initiates of the city of Tanagra in Boiotia. Chantraine links *gauros* to the Homeric form *gaiōn* ‘rejoicing, radiant’ which itself has no Indo-European cognates. The Semitic etymology is much more precise in both form and meaning.

⁶⁹Maçon, E. *Recherches sur les plus anciens emprunts sémitiques en grec*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1967.

The conventional etymology for the Greek *daimôn* is from *daiomai* 'share, divide'. The semantics of the equation is baffling. However, the Hebrew *dimyôn* 'likeness, manifestation' from the Semitic root *dmh* 'be like, resemble' fits very well indeed. *Daimôn* would seem to be a calque for the Egyptian *k3*, 'the spirit double' of both gods and men.

The most plausible origin for the Greek *haima* 'blood, spirit' comes from the Semitic *hayyîm*, 'life'. The phonetic correspondence is perfect and the semantic one is good because of the close connection between blood and life in Canaanite religion and the Homeric sense of *haima* as 'spirit' as well as blood.⁷⁰ It is also interesting to note that the other Greek term for 'blood', *ear*, which has a strong Indo-European etymology, is generally⁷¹ considered to be older than *haima*. It is in fact, one of three examples of basic terms in Swadesh's list where the Indo-European synonym appears to be older than the alleged 'Pre-Hellenic' one. Yet another indication that the base of the language was Indo-European and that the non-Indo European elements should be considered as coming from loans rather than a substrate.

With charming condescension Jasanoff and Nussbaum write that

'...*nāōs* (...) "temple" is connected by Bernal — correctly as it happens — with the verb *naīō* "I dwell."',⁷²

I derive both from the Semitic root *nwh* 'dwell.' They concede that '*neōs* and *naīō* lack problem-free cognates in other IE languages.' Their objection to my deriving it from Semitic is because they maintain that it 'must' derive from a root **nas* or stem **naswos*.⁷³ Here as so often they have fallen into the trap of reification of their own constructs, no such forms are actually attested and the variety of dialect forms can equally well be explained as resulting from a loan. Gary Rendsburg has pointed out that while *nāwāh* means 'dwell, abide' and *naweh* 'dwelling, abode', *naweh* is also used with the specialised meaning 'temple, shrine'.⁷⁴ As the semantic and phonetic correspondences of the Semitic etymology are excellent and there is no Indo-European competitor, it is merely perverse to object on the grounds of a purely hypothetical construction.

I maintain that around 15% of Greek roots have Semitic origins and

⁷⁰Rendsburg, 1989, p. 71 is particularly impressed by this etymology.

⁷¹Chantraine, s.v. *haima*; Pokorny, J., 1959-69, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2 vols., Bern & Munich: Franke, s.v. *ear*; Onians, R.B., 1988, *The origins of European thought: About the body, the mind, the soul, the world, time and fate*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (first published 1951), p. 178, n. 8, plausibly sees ear 'blood' as linked to ear 'Spring', 'sap', which is undoubtedly old.

⁷²Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p. 200.

⁷³*Ibid.* However, Chantraine merely writes, 'les diverses formes dialectales conduisent à poser un prototype **naswos*.'

⁷⁴Exodus 15.13; Rendsburg 1989, pp. 77-78.

almost half of these have already been recognised.⁷⁵ The difference between my views and those of conventional lexicographers is far greater in the case of Egyptian, from which only a few dozen loans are acknowledged, whereas I believe that over 20% of the Greek lexicon, as set out by etymological lexicographers can be plausibly derived from it.

One example of the relative tolerance for loans from Semitic is the Greek *souson* 'lily' from the West Semitic *šûšan* or *šôšan* 'lily-like flower', from which, of course, the Biblical Susanah and our Susan. In this case, it is also admitted that the Hebrew word derives from the Egyptian *sšn*. However, there is a related Egyptian word *sšnw* meaning 'ropes, cordage'. This provides an excellent etymon for the second sense of the Greek *souson*, 'ship's cordage' for which Chantraine provides no etymology. The failure to make this obvious connection is overdetermined. This is because the reluctance to consider Egyptian as a source is compounded by an ideological distaste for the idea of Egyptian seamanship and a particular sensitivity over the origin of Greek nautical terms.⁷⁶

There are other examples in this semantic field such as the Greek *prumnos*, for which there is no Indo-European etymology. This has two meanings, 'shoulder' and 'poop deck'. In Egyptian, the word *rmn* has the sense 'shoulder' and by extension 'processional shrine'. We also know that processional shrines were frequently placed ceremonially on the poops of ships. There are in fact splendid illustrations of this on the Egyptian-style boats in the frescoes from the Greek island of Thera, from before the eruption of 1628 BCE.⁷⁷ With the Egyptian masculine definite article *p3* *rmn* not only provides a splendid etymology for *prumnos*, but also for the Greek *premnon* 'stump, base support', for which, too, Chantraine provides no etymology.

If an Egyptian etymology can help explain apparently incongruent meanings of Greek words, then Greek words can explain discrepant meanings of Egyptian words. For instance, the Greek *odunê* 'physical pain' and *ôdîs*, (*ôdinos*) 'birth pangs, travail' have no satisfactory Indo-European etymologies. Chantraine tentatively suggests that the latter may be derived from **ed*, 'eat.' However, in Egyptian there are two homonyms *wdn* meaning 'install as a god or king' and 'heavy, copious, burdensome, oppressive.' In Egyptian (and other) religions, installation

⁷⁵See A. Morpurgo-Davies 'The linguistic evidence', p. 105.

⁷⁶See Pierre Chantraine, 'Sur la vocabulaire maritime des Grecs' pp. 1-25 in: [A. Meillet, preface], *Étrennes de linguistique: offertes par quelques amis à Émile Benveniste*, Paris: Geuthner, 1928).

⁷⁷See Lyvia Morgan, *The miniature wall paintings of Thera: A study in Aegean culture and iconography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 137-141.

into exalted ranks was seen as a form of birth and the latter meanings fit well with pregnancy, birth pangs and labour.'

Twr or *trî* is an Egyptian word for 'reed.' This would seem a plausible origin for the Greek *thruon* 'reed.' The Egyptian *t-* was frequently rendered as *th-* in Greek, as in the name of the Egyptian goddess *T3 wrt > Thoueris*. From *twr* there was the word *twrît*, 'a pipe of reed, wood or bone'. This is undoubtedly the source of the Greek *tereitis* 'an Egyptian musical instrument' and almost certainly of *teretizô* 'hum, chirp or chatter' which Chantraine describes as onomatopoeic. *Twrît* with the participial suffix *-w* would have formed the word **twrît-w*, 'piper' This is interesting because of the Laconian poet of the 7th century BCE, Tyrtaios or Tritaios, who composed elegies for the pipe!

The Egyptian *ḏsr* means 'holy, splendid, costly' and *ḏsrw* is 'holy place, inner sanctum'. The Greek *thêsauros* is 'storehouse, treasure usually in temple'. Chantraine is very uncertain about the origin of this word and cautiously suggests a derivation from *tithêmi*, 'I place' — a vague and greatly inferior etymology.

The Egyptian *p3 w'b, peiouop* and alone as *ouab* in Coptic means 'the pure, the clean,' and the hieroglyph illustrates lustration. The Greek Phoibos is best known as an epithet of Apollo but the basic meaning of *phoibos* is 'pure of water, bright.' Thus both the semantic and the phonetic correspondences are excellent. Chantraine provides no Indo-European etymology.

Sni in Middle Egyptian and the Coptic *sine* 'pass or transgress' and its derivative *soone* 'robber' supply a good etymology for the Greek *sinomai* 'ravage, hurt, make mischief' for which no Indo-European origin can be found.

The Egyptian *sdr* is to 'pass the night' and *sdryt* appears to mean 'sleeping place'; by the New Kingdom *sdr̄t* was used for 'night camp, bivouac'.⁷⁸ This provides a strong etymology for the Greek *stratos* 'camp' from which so many Greek military terms are derived. The proposed Indo-European etymology from a root found in the Sanskrit *st.rta* and the Latin *sternum* 'stretched' has a far greater semantic distance.

The Egyptian *ḥsî, ḥsw* means 'minstrel, singer.' Therefore it is interesting to find that the earliest Greek poet whose work is extant was called Hesiod. This is generally explained as one who 'throws' *hêsi* his voice *wodê*. Whatever the final syllables, the initial one is far more plausibly explained as 'singer' than as 'thrower'. The verb *ḥsî, ḥôds* in Coptic means both 'sing and 'praise' and *ḥsî*, Coptic *ḥasie* was used to denote 'praised drowned or sacred person.' *ḥsî*, as 'praised dead' was

⁷⁸See *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 24, 1938: 191, n. 6.

written *hesiês* in later Greek. Much earlier in Homer there was the term *hosios* 'pious, conforming to religious prescriptions' from which was derived the word *osiotêr* 'perfect animal fit for sacrifice'. None of these words have Indo-European etymologies.

From the Egyptian Old Kingdom the word *htr* was used to denote 'yoke, binding together as of oxen'. With the introduction of horses and chariots by the beginning of the New Kingdom, it was also used for 'pair of horses' and 'chariotry'. In human terms it was used for 'twins' found in Coptic as *hatre*. In Greek *hetairos* originally meant 'comrade in arms, partner'. Chantraine links this to another word for 'companion' *etês*, which he derives from a hypothetical Indo-European root found in the Russian *svatu* 'brother in law'. However, there is also the Greek *heteros* found in Linear B as *a₂tero* 'other one of two', which is a perfect match for *htr* in both phonetics and semantics. A loan from *htr* rather than an Indo-European derivation would explain the differences between two such similar words as *hetairos* and *heteros*.

Now to the central etymology, my derivation of *Athena* and *Athenai* (Athens) from *Ht Nt* (that is 'Temple of [the Goddess] Neith').

7. From Neith to Athena — From Ht (n) Nt to Athēnaiē

There is little doubt that *Ht* 'house or temple' was originally pronounced *Hwt*. However, even Jasanoff and Nussbaum admit that the *Aikupitiyo* found in Linear B is from the Egyptian *Ht k3 Pth* 'Temple of the Spirit of Ptah'. Thus, we know that by the 2nd millennium the *h* could be neutralised and the vowel heard as simply as *a*-. In this case, the final *-t*-disappeared, possibly because of the conjunction *-tk-* which was not tolerated in Greek.⁷⁹ In Coptic and Greek renderings such as *Hwt (t3) hr ib* > Athribis in Greek and *Hwt Rpyt* > *Atrêpe* or *Athrêbe* in Coptic, or the Goddess *Hwt Hr* (House of Horus) rendered in Coptic as *Hathôr* or *Athôr* and in Greek as *Athur*. The *-t* in *Hwt* was preserved as *t* or *th*, at least in front of sonorants. Thus, there is a correspondence of the initial vowel and the first consonant.

As Jasanoff and Nussbaum point out, the following long vowel — it is not accented in the Homeric *Athēnaiē* — does present a problem, but it is not insuperable. There are in fact two possible solutions. The first of these is that the Greek form derived from an attested variant *Ht n Nt*, 'Temple of Neith' with the genitival *n*, giving a hypothetical **Hāt Vn Nāi^ot*. Greek

⁷⁹See H. Smyth, *Greek grammar*, revised by Gordon Messing, Cambridge Mass. 1956, section 84. p. 26.

shared the common phenomenon of compensatory lengthening of vowels to replace dropped consonants so that the vowel before lost *-n-* would be lengthened.⁸⁰

The second, more likely, possibility comes from the fact that Egyptian frequently had unmarked prothetic vowels. The likelihood in this case is increased by the name *'Anât*, given to a very similar West Semitic goddess. Shifts from *'ayin* to *>aleph* occur both in Egyptian and some Semitic languages.⁸¹ In this case, the length of the vowel may well come from a development within Greek, possibly as a result of what is sometimes called 'Wackernagel's Second Law,' according to which the initial vowel in the second element of a compound word was lengthened.⁸² This would require *Ht Nt* to have been seen as a compound.

There is no problem with the *-n-*. The original vocalisation of *Nt* would seem to have been *-ā-*. The vowel's quality is suggested by the Biblical name of Joseph's Egyptian wife *>Asenat* which was probably from the Egyptian *n(y) s(y) Nt* 'She belongs to *Nt*.' The quantity is indicated by Plato's rendering of *Nt* as *Nēith*, which would have gone through the Ionic shift *ā>ē* in Greek. The latter and other renditions of *Nt* as *Nit-* or *Neth* also indicate an original form **Nṛiṛ*.

The glide does not always appear in Greek. It is not present in the Doric *Athānā* and the Mycenaean *Atana*. However, Homer, whose language was sometimes more archaic than that written in Linear B, uses *Athēnaiē* and there is an Attic form *Athēnaía*.⁸³

To work in the spirit of Jasanoff and Nussbaum, and in severe danger of misplaced precision, I tentatively propose the following sequence: a Middle Egyptian form c. 2000 BCE **HataNāiṛ* was introduced into Proto-Greek as **H₂atanāiṛ*. With the disappearance of the Proto-Indo-European laryngeals, this became **Atanāiṛ*, and **Atanāi(a)* with the elimination of final stops. Following Wackernagel's Second Law the 2nd *-a-* became *ā* giving **Atānāi(a)*. The Attic form *Athēnaía* and the Homeric *Athēnaiē* developed with the Ionic shift *ā>ē*. Given the awkwardness of Linear B, it is impossible to know precisely what sound was conveyed by *Atana*, but the Doric *Athānā* suggests that it could be accurate. Nevertheless, the

⁸⁰Smyth, section 37, p. 16; *i*° here denotes an *i* with an off-glide.

⁸¹See Loprieno p.44. and S. Moscati, A. Spitaler, Edward Ullendorff and W. von Soden, *An introduction to the comparative grammar of the Semitic languages: Phonology and morphology*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1969, p. 41.

⁸²See Collinge, N.E., 1985, *The laws of Indo-European*, Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 238-239.

⁸³The idea that the form *Athēnaiē* comes from 'she of the city Athenai' is made less likely by the fact that most historians of Greek religion believe that the city gained its name from the goddess not vice versa. See Martin Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechische Religion*, I, Munich, 1941, p.407; and Walter Burkert, 1985, pp. 139-140.

forms *Athēnā* and *Athēnē* derive from *Athēnaia* and *Athēnaiē* by normal contraction. The only feature not fully explained is the *theta* but the rendering of Egyptian *t* *s* and *t s* in Greek is very irregular. The city name was formed in the same way but retaining the ‘plural/ dual’ ending for cities *-ai*.

Jasanoff & Nussbaum say that the only phonetic similarity they can see is a *t* followed by an *n*. In fact, the Egyptian *Ht* was transcribed in Coptic and Greek as *At(h)* and the second millennium vocalisation of *Nt* was probably **Nait*. Furthermore, there are reasonable explanations within Greek for the long vowel between them.⁸⁴

On the semantics, Jasanoff & Nussbaum argue that:

‘Augustine, as good a representative of “the Ancients” as Jerome (cf. *Black Athena II*: 253), tells us that the pagan gods and goddesses of the Greeks and Romans were demons whose worship was dispelled with the adoption of Christianity. Under Bernal’s logic, it would seem perfectly legitimate to contemplate a direct borrowing of “Athena” from a feminized variant of the Hebr. *šāṭān* “Satan” (older spelling *Sathan*), via the phonetic stages **Sāt(h)ānā* > **Hāthānā* > *Athānā*. Responsible scholars will not be convinced by such linguistic sleight of hand, but the Great Deceiver would surely be amused.’⁸⁵

Apart from their hypothetical **Sāt(h)ānā* being completely unattested, as they intended, the semantic correspondence is ludicrous. In sharp contrast, those between Neith and Athena are plentiful and intricately connected. Both were virgin goddesses of warfare, wisdom and weaving.⁸⁶ Herodotus and Plato saw Neith and Athena as two names of the same deity. In Egypt it was normal for a divinity to be addressed by the name of their dwelling. Thus, for instance, *Pr* ‘3, ‘great house’ became the name of its divine resident, the ‘Pharaoh’. Likewise, the City name *Pr W3dyt*, ‘House of the Cobra Goddess *W3dyt*’ known to the Greeks as

⁸⁴For further details see my *Black Athena writes back*, Duke University Press, forthcoming.

⁸⁵Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p. 194

⁸⁶The association with warfare is universally acknowledged. See R. Schlichting, ‘Neith’ in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. W. Helck and E. Otto 5 vols. 1975-84 vol. IV. cols. 392-394; and: R. El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 2. vols. Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie du Caire, Bibliothèque d’étude, T. LXXXVI, 1982, I, pp. 72-76. Schlichting, suggests that other similarities between Neith and Athena are the result of ‘Verschmelzung mit der griech. Göttin’, notably ‘in der Sp(ät)z(ei)t’. However, in his fuller study El-Sayed, points out (pp. 114-115) that the association between Neith and Thoth, the god of wisdom, is attested in the 18th Dynasty. The Chester Beatty Papyrus of the 20th Dynasty describes Neith as being asked to pronounce judgement in the case between Horus and Seth (see El-Sayed doc 386 p, 374). See the political and judicial roles of Athena (L.R. Farnell, *The cults of the Greek states*, 3 vols. in 5. reprinted New Rochelle: Caratzas Brothers, 1977, I, pp. 302-306). The associations between Neith, Saïs and weaving go back to the Old Kingdom see El-Sayed, pp. 17-18. For the goddesses’ virginity see below.

Boutos, has also been attested for the Goddess herself.⁸⁷ Similarly *Pr B3styt*, the Greek Boubastis was the name of the cult centre in the Eastern Delta of the lion goddess Bast and of the goddess herself.⁸⁸ This would explain the Greek confusion between the names of the goddess Athena and her city Athenai. The cult of Neith in lower Egypt was centered in the city of Saïs in the Western Delta. Saïs was a secular name, the city's sacred name was *Ht Nt*. In the sixth century BCE, at the latest, citizens of the two cities felt a special affinity.⁸⁹ In Late Antiquity, the historian Kharax of Pergamon wrote, 'The Saitians call their city Athenai.'⁹⁰ This statement makes very good sense if they saw *Ht Nt* as Athenai.

Against all this Jasanoff & Nussbaum are only able to say that 'Temple of Neit' is no more likely a priori than an 'olive grove,' 'rocky crag' or countless other possible glosses'.⁹¹ While these names do fit the topography of the Acropolis, Jasanoff & Nussbaum are unable to suggest any Greek roots for the names they suggest. Furthermore, they do not provide any explanation for the connection between the goddess and the city which *Ht Nt* does. At the beginning of the twentieth century scholars like Percy Newberry and Arthur Evans adduced iconographic evidence to indicate a very early connection between Neith and Athena.⁹² Since Predynastic times in the 4th millennium the sign of Neith resembled a shield on a stick, often with crossed arrows. This symbolism has been plausibly suggested as the origin of the so-called 'shield goddess' sign in Crete. We know that the divinity was feminine because of a Mycenaean plaque⁹³ in which the shield is shown with white limbs (following the Egyptian convention, Minoan women were painted yellow-white and men red-brown.) It is widely accepted that this was the origin of the Palladion, a cult object (found in the Archaic and Classical periods) associated with Pallas Athena in the form of a armour on a post. Here one can trace the iconographic development from Egypt in the fourth and third millennia BCE. through Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece in the second. All of

⁸⁷See A. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 3 vols., 1947, II, p. 56.

⁸⁸See E. Otto, 'Bastet' in: Helck & Otto, vol. I. cols. 627-630.

⁸⁹Plato, *Timaeus* II. 21.

⁹⁰FGrHist = F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Leiden: Brill, 1923-27, 103, F 39.

⁹¹Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p. 194.

⁹²See: P. Newberry, 'Note', *Proceedings of the Society for Biblical Archaeology*, 1906, pp. 72-73; and A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, 4 vols. in 6. 1921-1935, II. 1, pp. 48-54.

⁹³Cf. E. Gardiner in his 'Palladia from Mycenae', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 13, 1893: 21-28. See also M. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechische Religion I, o.c.*, pp. 324 and 405-408.

which fits perfectly with the cultic and literary associations of Neith with Athena.

Sais was on the frontier of Egypt and Libya and Neith and in both Egyptian and Greek texts the goddess had Libyan associations. Herodotus⁹⁴ linked her cult to a tradition of fighting women in Libya.

Three years ago, I found the entry *Pr Thn* in H. Gauthier's *Dictionnaire*,⁹⁵ referring to a temple in Sais. *Pr Thn* means 'Brilliant temple, Temple of Jewels' or 'Temple of Faience.' In the Late period, *thn* written with the sign of Neith was seen as a personification of the brilliance of the Sun God.⁹⁶

With a different determinative, *Thn* or *Thnw* was the name of a people who lived to the West of the Delta. Their *Thnw* oil which the Egyptologist Percy Newberry identified with olive oil, provides yet another association with Athena, whose sacred tree was the olive. Arthur Evans associated the name of the people with *thn* 'faience' in the light of the supplies of natron necessary in its production, as found in the Libyan oases.⁹⁷ Alan Gardiner too, wrote about the *Thnw*, pointing out that although they were Libyans living in Cyrenaica and had been previously thought to be 'white', in pictures they were represented as physically resembling Egyptians. He considered the possibility that they also lived further south, in or near the Fayyoun.⁹⁸ Recently, this view has been strongly reinforced by Claude Vandersleyen.⁹⁹ In his note on the subject, Gardiner also mentioned that there was a reference from the Old Kingdom to a *Nt Thnw*.¹⁰⁰

Pr Thn looks very like the name 'Parthenon,' the temple of Athena in Athens. *Parthenos* is usually seen as 'young girl, virgin'. However, the Homeric adjective *parthenios* and the later *parthenias* 'son of a young girl, or concubine' shows that virginity was not always insisted upon. Neither Chantraine, nor Frisk¹⁰¹ nor even Van Windekens¹⁰² have found an Indo-European etymology for this important Greek word. It should be noted

⁹⁴Herodotus IV. 180. For Egyptian sources see Gardiner *Ancient Egyptian onomastica I*, p. 118 and El-Sayed pp. 193-194.

⁹⁵Gauthier, H., 1925-1931, *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques*, 7 vols., Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale.

⁹⁶Erman, A., and Grapow, H., 1925-31, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 7 vols, reprint, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1982, 5. p. 393.

⁹⁷Evans, A., *Palace of Minos II.1*, p. 53-55.

⁹⁸Gardiner, 1947, II, pp. 116-119.

⁹⁹Vandersleyen, C., 1995, 'Le Delta et les guerres de Mérenptah et de Ramsès II contre les peuples de l'ouest', paper given at the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995.

¹⁰⁰Gardiner, 1947. II. p. 118.

¹⁰¹Frisk, H., 1955-72, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

¹⁰²A.J. van Windekens, *Dictionnaire étymologique complémentaire de la langue grecque*, Leuven/ Paris: Peeters, 1986.

here, that despite striking similarities some of which have been discussed above, the correspondences of attributes between Neith and Athena are not exact. However, given the great variety of such attributes with Egyptian and Greek cults this is not surprising. The expert on Greek religion, Walter Burkert discusses the well-known myth of the conception of Erechtheus from Hephaistos' semen spent on Athena's thigh, concluding:

'Athena the virgin, thus comes within an ace of being the mother of the ancestral king... The paradox of the identity of virgin and mother is something the myth recoils from articulating.'¹⁰³

Nevertheless, Athena's virginity was an important aspect of her persona. The early 20th century classicist L. R. Farnell remarked about this:

'...the dogma that maidenhood was essential to her nature was rooted in myth and popular feeling; this prevailed, not so much because the goddess, like Artemis, embodied the ideal of chastity, but probably because her masculine and warlike temperament, which kept her free from the ties and weakness of womanhood.'¹⁰⁴

This statement should not be discounted because of its unthinking sexism. Athenians of the Archaic and Classical periods were even more sexist than Victorian classicists. Thus, we should accept that both goddesses had profound bisexual aspects.¹⁰⁵ While possessing these, from the 18th Dynasty Neith was seen as the mother of Re and by the 21st (1087-945 BCE) she was seen as his daughter.¹⁰⁶ This provides a striking parallel with Athena's direct birth from Zeus.

If the association between *Pr Thn* and *parthenos* and Parthenon is accepted it brings both good and bad news for my thesis.

From the earliest times Neith was associated with the eye of Horus, and later both she and a figure called *Thny* were known as 'the eye of Re'.¹⁰⁷ Athena had a number of epicleses concerning eyes: *Ophthalmîtis* and *Oxyderkîs*. Above all, there is the Homeric epithet *Glaukôpis* applied to her and other frightening creatures, meaning 'pale and brilliant eyes'. This obviously derives from the word *glaukós*, 'grey' or 'light blue; terrible; brilliant.' This is another word which Jasanoff and Nussbaum admit¹⁰⁸ lacks an Indo-European etymology. However, it has a good Egyptian one in *g3g3* 'dazzle, amaze', written with the eye determinative. *Glaukós* is also related to *glaûx* 'owl', the large eyed and ferocious bird of Athena parallel to the vulture which is sacred to Neith.

¹⁰³Burkert, W., *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan, Cambridge Mass. 1985, p. 143.

¹⁰⁴Farnell, I, p. 303.

¹⁰⁵For Neith see, El Sayed, pp. 58-61.

¹⁰⁶El Sayed, I.106-110.

¹⁰⁷El-Sayed, I, p. 110.

¹⁰⁸Jasanoff & Nussbaum, p. 185.

Plato¹⁰⁹ described the eyes of Pheidias' statue of the goddess in the *Parthēnōn* as set with jewels and Cicero¹¹⁰ saw light-blue flashing eyes in the ideal type of Athena's Roman counterpart Minerva. Diodoros Sikeliotes denied this 'Greek idea' as 'a silly explanation.' According to him, the real reason was because 'the Air has a bluish cast.'¹¹¹ In fact, the two images are not mutually exclusive and there is no reason to deny that Athena was represented as having flashing blue eyes. In some societies where the overwhelming majority of the population is brown-eyed, such as Mongolia and China, blue eyes have been traditionally seen as a sign of ferocity. Greek connotations of *Glaukōpis* suggest that the paleness of Athena's eyes added to the terror she inspired.¹¹²

The same was probably true of Neith in Egypt. In any event, her associations with blue green 'faience' and the bright sky and the association of *thn(t)* with eyes suggest that — even when hidden by a veil — her eyes too were visualised as blue.¹¹³ Pausanias specifically refers to the myth of Athena's *glaukous* eyes as 'Libyan'.¹¹⁴

Thus, we would seem to have the paradox that Athena's blue eyes came from Africa. While this certainly complicates the name *Black Athena*, it strengthens my overall case and that of my preferred title **African Athena*. Specifically, it provides further evidence of the extraordinarily rich network of associations linking the two goddesses and the two names *Ht Nt* and *Athēnaía*.

¹⁰⁹Hippias Major 290 B.

¹¹⁰Cicero, *De natura deorum*, I.83.

¹¹¹Diodorus Siculus *I Books I-II*, 34. trans. C.H. Oldfather, Loeb, London/ New York, 1968, I:12.8, p. 45.

¹¹²For the uncanniness of blue eyes see: Chantraine, P., 'Grec *glauko%*₀₀₁ *Glau~koi* et mycénien "karauko" ', in: *Mélanges d'archéologie, d'épigraphie et d'histoire offerts à Jérôme Carcopino*, Paris: Hachette, 1966; Maxwell-Stewart, P.G., *Studies in Greek Colour Terminology* vol. I, GLAUKOS = Mnemosyne Supplement 65 (Leiden Brill, 1981, 169-170; and (opposed to the notion): E. Watson-Williams, 'GLAUKWPIS AQHNH', *Greece and Rome* N.S. 1, 1954, 36-41. I am indebted to R. Drew Griffith for these references.

¹¹³For her veiling which seems to have indicated both her virginity and the upper blue sky see: Plutarch *De Iside...* 354.C; and: Proklos, *In Platonis Timaeum commentarii* 30. For the Egyptian theological reality behind their reports, see: Hani, J., 1976, *La Religion égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque, collection d'études mythologiques*, Centre de Recherche Mythologique de l'Université de Paris. Paris: 'Les Belles Lettres', p. 244.

¹¹⁴He went on to say that

'The Libyans have written that Athena was the daughter of Poseidon and the Tritonian Lake and has *glaukous* eyes' (I.14.6).

8. Conclusion

I shall end with a quotation from Walter Burkert's book *The orientaling revolution: Near Eastern influence on Greek culture in the early archaic age*.¹¹⁵ *Black Athena* should not be seen in isolation; at the same period in which it was being conceived, the late 1970s, Burkert began to lead a small but increasingly influential movement among classicists to emphasise the impact of South West Asia on Greece and the influence of anti-Semitism on previous scholars' reluctance to recognise this:

'While the negative statements of critics enjoy the advantage of seeming caution and strict methodology linguists can keep to well-established laws of phonetic evolution within a closed system, whereas borrowings are mostly inferred from similarities of sounds that may be fortuitous. But it is precisely methodology which is the problem. Greek language, at any rate the literary Greek that we know, absolutely rejects the use of unadapted foreign words; they are accepted only in perfectly assimilated form as to phonetics and inflexion. Thus there can be no method to discover borrowed words: they imitate and go into hiding, adapting themselves to the roots and suffixes of native Greek... popular etymology plays its role in this metamorphosis; no rules for phonetic evolution can be established...' (p. 35).

I think he goes a bit too far because if one knows the period of loaning and the dialects through which the loans were transmitted it is possible to establish regularities. Nevertheless Burkert is quite right when he concludes this section:

'In any case, the kind of minimalism that rejects all connections with Semitic [I would add 'and Egyptian'] that are not crystal clear remains, on the whole the most unlikely of possible hypotheses.'¹¹⁶

I too will end at this point.

¹¹⁵Burkert, W., 1992, *The orientaling revolution: Near Eastern influence on Greek culture in the Early Archaic Age*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, first published 1984, p. 35.

¹¹⁶Burkert, p. 40.