



**Interdisziplinäre Atrium-Ringvorlesung:
Antike Welten und Archäologien: Neue Forschungen**

In Verbindung mit dem Forschungszentrum **AWOSA: ANCIENT WORLDS STUDIES AND ARCHAEOLOGIES**

Mittwoch, 15. November 2017 von 18:00 bis 19:30 Uhr, SR 1

**The “Great Leap” in Early Greek Politics and Political Thought:
The End of an East-West *koinē***

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Scholars find increasing evidence that a “cultural *koinē*” existed in the eastern Mediterranean world in the early Iron Age, just as it had in the Late Bronze Age. As far as political thought and practice are concerned, however, such a *koinē* ended in the seventh century BCE. This paper argues that patterns visible in these areas and widely shared by Greeks and Near Eastern societies, are still visible in the early seventh century. Soon thereafter, though, the Greeks diverged from that common tradition; they embarked on a path of radical innovation that has no parallels in the Ancient Near East, took their fledgling political life and thinking in a decidedly new direction and enabled them to discover ideas, values, institutions, and procedures that had a profound and long-lasting impact on the development of western political thought and action.

The first—and for the present occasion most important—part of this paper reconstructs the early Iron Age east-west *koinē* in political thought and practice, based on close analogies in two areas. One is the way in which Greek, Assyrian, and Hebrew (Biblical) political thinking deals with the issue of injustice, committed by leaders, rulers, or the elite, that harms the entire community and is punished by divine intervention. The other concerns, in the same societies, the role and function of assemblies and councils and relations between these two institutions.

The second part of this paper discusses, more briefly, the Greek “break-away” from the traditional *koinē* and its historical significance. The final part tries to explain this “great leap” and to place it in its historical context.