William Harris asked me to discuss Finley's book, *Democracy Ancient and Modern* [*DAM*], and I shall mainly do that. He also asked me to talk about Moses as a practical politician, in Cambridge, and I shall do that also, in a small but not insignificant way, as regards his specifically academic or pedagogical politics at both the local (Cambridge) and the national (England and Wales) levels. This is particularly congenial territory for me, both intellectual and personal. But I begin my discussion of the background, contexts and contents of the two English editions and several translations of *DAM* by taking a leaf out of the Book of 'Mom' (Arnaldo Dante Momigliano). That is to say, before we study the History we must study the Historian; and a quite extraordinary, indeed in several ways unprecedented and unparalleled, Historian Finley was too. In this case, a mere 'Life and Times' would not be adequate, since the Times Finley lived in and through not only seriously influenced his Historiography but in the fullest sense eventually determined his Life as a whole. 'Look to the End', as Finley's ancient Greeks might have said.

I apologise for rehearsing and repeating what may well be utterly familiar material. I do so solely to contextualise *DAM* properly. Born in 1912 into a New York City Jewish family, Moe Finkelstein, as he was then known, was

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1 For such autobiographical details, see my contribution to the parallel Cambridge commemorative volume (Osborne et al. forthcoming).

2 Momigliano (1908–1987) was a firm friend of Finley's, and their intellectual admiration was mutual too; e.g., Momigliano gave an exceptionally warm welcome to three of Finley's books (including *DAM*) in the *New York Review of Books* (Momigliano 1975). Possibly indeed the admiration was a little too mutual, at any rate so far as Finley's regard for Momigliano was concerned. Momigliano's idiosyncratic variety of intellectual histor(iograph)y was hard to imitate, let alone emulate; Finley's attempts—e.g., in the first chapter of *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (Finley 1980/1998)—were markedly less successful and, moreover, distracted him somewhat from his own earlier distinctive and highly persuasive style of essay-writing.
a child prodigy, more specifically a math genius, from a very young age. In 1923, when only 11, he began attending Syracuse University, NY, graduating as a psychology major in 1927 aged just 15.\(^3\) From Syracuse he transferred to Columbia, to do an MA—in modern American legal history. But when it came to moving on to do a PhD at Columbia, in the early 1930s, still aged under 20, he decided typically enough to attend lectures by the ancient historian W. L. Westermann, significantly a specialist in ancient Greek and Roman slavery.\(^4\) It was those lectures, Finley said, which determined his turn towards the ancient world, a turn which bore published fruit in his first two academic papers, in 1934 and 1935 respectively.\(^5\)

By then, however, deep into FDR’s first term as a President committed to at least alleviating the worst effects of the Great Crash and the great depression, Finley’s purely or narrowly academic interests and endeavours were taking second place to a powerful and powerfully active political involvement—quite near to the extreme left of American politics, indeed.\(^6\) This was a commitment reinforced by the probably even more leftist views of his lifetime soulmate, his wife Mary,\(^7\) and it carried him on into and through the Second World War. It helped, of course, that Finley was able constantly to relate his practical political work to the marxist and weberian historiographical theory that he was imbibing and developing through his association from the later 1930s with the transplanted German-Jewish refugee Institut für Sozialforschung (for ‘social’ research read ‘marxist’ research), the so-called Frankfurt School.\(^8\) But, given my topic and focus here, I single out for special mention the fact that in the

\(^3\) All such early biographical details are most easily accessible in Whittaker’s necrology: Whittaker 1997.

\(^4\) Westermann’s article ‘Sklaverei’ appeared in Pauly-Wissowa in 1935; it was the basis of his The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity (Westermann 1955), which was not well reviewed. One suspects that it was partly as an act of pietas to a former doctoral supervisor that Finley, who had reviewed Westermann when still a graduate student of his in 1936, chose to reprint two articles by Westermann in the collection he edited entitled Slavery in Classical Antiquity (Finley 1960), though, if that is so, a letter by Westermann on Finley unearthed by Dan Tompkins might, had he known its contents, have given him pause.

\(^5\) See the bibliography in Finley 1982b.

\(^6\) This was an aspect of his past that the English or post-1952 Finley did not care to dwell upon, indeed to mention either publicly or privately, but that it was the case has been shown incontrovertibly by Dan Tompkins.

\(^7\) Née Moscowitz, later Thiers, a fellow Columbia graduate student, whom he married when he was aged 20; on learning of her death 54 years later, he soon suffered a stroke, from which he died the following day.

\(^8\) On Finley’s association with the Frankfurt School in exile, see Tompkins 2006.