

readings from

hellas

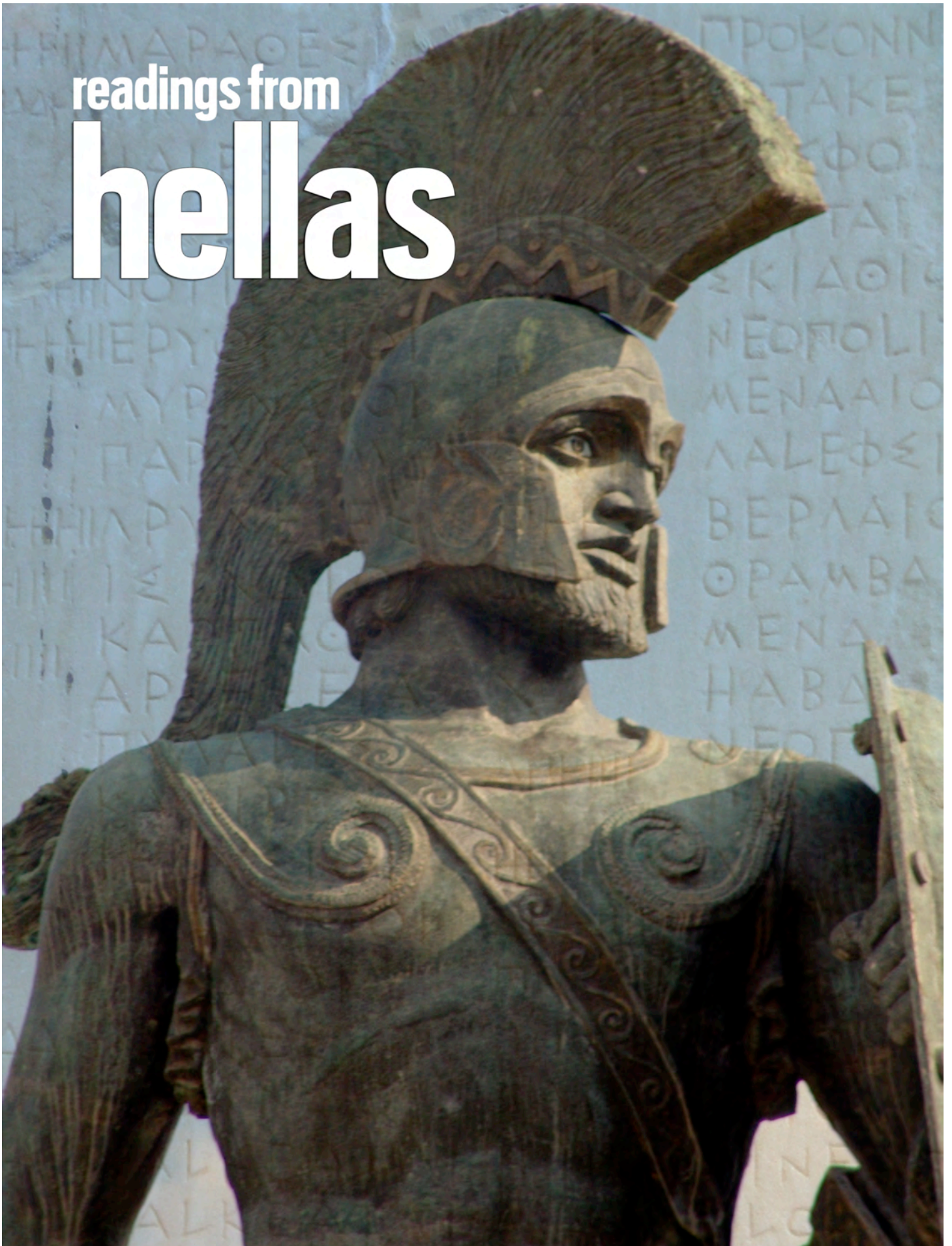


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The Death of Patroclus*

The Iliad, Book 16—This is a crucial book and a turning point because in it Zeus must sit idly by knowing his mortal son Sarpedon, king of one of Troy's allies, will be killed, and Achilles' friend Patroclus is also killed. Zeus knows that the death of Patroclus will force Achilles to fight for the Greeks (also collectively called Danaans and Achaians). This will allow Zeus to fulfill his promise to Achilles' mother, the water goddess Thetis, to give glory to Achilles.

Here, Patroclus is pleading with Achilles, who has been wronged by the Greek overlord Agamemnon, to help fend off a Trojan raid against the Greek ships and camp.

“Don't be angry, Achilles my prince, our strong deliverer! Such misfortune has come on our people! There they are, all who used to be best in the field, lying wounded, shot or stabbed, somewhere among the ships! Diomedes Tydeides is wounded, Odysseus is wounded, Agamemnon is wounded, Eurypylos is wounded too—shot in the thigh with an arrow. They have the surgeons busy about them with all their medicines curing the wounds—but there's no curing you, Achilles! I pray I may never have such a grudge in my heart as you have. Curse your courage! What good will you be to any one from now to the end of the world, if you will not save the nation from destruction? Cruel man! your father was not Peleus nor your mother Thetis—you are a son of the green sea and stony rock, with that hard heart!”

“If there is some prophecy you are afraid of which your mother told you from the lips of Zeus, let *me* go at least and take out our Myrmidons,† to see if there is any hope in that way! Put your armour upon my shoulders, and perhaps the Trojans may think it is you, and give a little rest to our tormented people. Little time to take your breath face to face with sudden death! And it will be easy for us coming into the battle fresh, to drive weary men from our camp away to their city!”

So he prayed, poor fool! for his prayer was destined to bring death and destruction for himself. Achilles replied in hot anger:

“Ah, what have you said, Patroclus, my dear friend! I care for no prophecy, if I do know any; my mother has told me none from the lips of Zeus. But I feel bitter grief in my heart, when here is a man who will rob his equal and take back his prize because he is the

stronger. This is a terrible grief to me, and this has been my torment. The girl that the army chose out for my prize, whom I made my own by force of arms when I took that city—that girl my lord King Agamemnon tore from my hands as if I were a foreigner without any rights! ...

“Never mind—fall on them and beat them, Patroclus! Save our ships, or they will burn them and we shall never see home again. But listen carefully while I tell you exactly what to do, that you may win honour and glory for me from the whole nation, and they may send back that lovely girl and handsome gifts besides.

“When you have cleared them away from the ships, come straight back. If after that the loud-thundering lord of Hera gives you a chance of triumph, never think of fighting on your own account without me, you will steal my honours in that way. Don't be excited by fighting and victory so as to lead our men as far the city walls, or one of the Olympian gods may meddle; Apollo Shootafar is very fond of them. You must turn back as soon as you have saved the ships, and let them ravage the plain. ...”

[Meanwhile Hector gets the better of those defending the ships and manages to start one of them on fire.]

And then Achilles slapped his two thighs, crying out:

“Hurry, Patroclus, my friend, be off with your horses! I see fire sweeping about the ships! I fear they may take the ships and then we shall never get away. On with your armour, and I will wake up the men!”

Patroclus lost no time. He put on his legs the greaves with silver anklets, next covered his chest with the star-bespangled corselet of Macias. Over his shoulders he slung the sword, with bronze blade and silver knob, and then the great strong shield. Upon his head he set the helmet with its plume nodding defiance. He took two lances that fitted his grip, but not the spear of Aiacidēs; for only Achilles could wield that huge heavy pike, not another man in the Achaian host. This was the strong ashen spear from Mount Pelion, which Cheiron had given his father to be the terror of his enemies.

The horses he put in charge of Automedon, whom he thought more of than any one except Achilles himself, and he trusted him best to be ready at his call in battle. ...

Meanwhile Achilles had got the men under arms and marshalled in their camp. They were like a pack of ravening wolves ready for the hunt. ...

As soon as Achilles had arranged them all in their ranks, he gave his last orders in these stern words:

* Translation: W.H.D. Rouse, 1964.

† The contingent of Greeks led by Achilles, known as the fiercest of the Greeks.

“Myrmidons, do not forget all those threats of yours against the Trojans here in camp, and how you have reproached me while my resentment lasted. Would you not say—‘Hard-hearted man! You must have sucked bile from your mother’s breast! Cruel to keep us here against our will! At least let us sail away and go back home, since this poisonous bile is in your heart!’ How often you came crowding to talk at me like that. Now here is the great battle you were enamoured of, plain to see. Then let every man keep a stout heart and fight!”

As they heard this rousing speech from their King, they closed their ranks more firmly; helmets and shields were packed together, like the squared stones of a wall, which a man builds to keep the strong winds outside his house. Shield pressed on shield, helmet on helmet, man on man; the horsehair plumes on the shining horns nodded and touched so close the stood. In front of all two men made ready for battle, Patroclus and Automedon, two men with one mind, to lead the Myrmidons forward. ...

[Achilles prays to Zeus for successful defense of the ships and the safe return of Patroclus. Homer comments that only half of Achilles’s prayer was granted.]

Patroclus and his force marched on until they found the Trojans. They were like a swarm of wasps with a nest by the road, which boys have been teasing and poking in their way. The poor little fools only stir up trouble for everybody; and if a wayfarer disturbs the wasps by accident, they pour out fury and defend their home. Just as furious were the Myrmidons when they poured out of their camp with a great noise. ...

But when the Trojans saw Patroclus and his companions in their shining armour, they were amazed, and the ranks wavered; for they believed that Achilles had thrown off his resentment and made friends again. Every man looked about him for some escape from certain death. ...

[Patroclus kills the leader of those attacking the ships.]

The Trojans fled in rare confusion, leaving the half burnt ship, and the Danaans poured in among the ships with a deafening din. ... Then the Danaans had time to breathe for a little, but the battle was not over; the Trojans still held their ground, although they had been forced to leave the ships, and they were not yet running pell-mell in rout. ...

[Several single-combat victories by the Greeks ensue, and in the fierceness of the Greeks’ attack the Trojans collapse.]

Patroclus cut off the front of the routed army, and then drove them back towards the ships. He would not let them get back to their city, but kept them in the space between the ships and the river and the city

walls, charging and slaying, until he had exacted the price of many lives. ...

Sarpedon* saw his countrymen falling—he knew them by their dress, for they wore no loin-guard—and he called to them in reproach:

“Shame, Lycians! where are you running? Play up, men! I will meet this man myself, I want to know who he is that sweeps everything before him. Look how many good men and true he has killed!”

Then he jumped out of the car in his armour, and Patroclus when he saw did the same. They leapt at each other yelling, like a couple of vultures on a high rock shrieking and fighting with beak and claw. When Zeus saw them he said to Hera:

“This is very sad! Sarpedon, whom I love best of all men, is fated to be killed by Patroclus Menoitades. I really don’t know what to do. Shall I pick him up out of the battle alive, and put him down in his own country? Or shall I let him be killed by Menoitades?”

Hera said:

“O you dreadful creature, you mustn’t say that! A mortal man, doomed of old by fate, and you want to rescue him from death? Do as you like; but you cannot expect the rest of us gods to approve. Think for a moment: If you send Sarpedon home alive, some other god may want to take his son out of the battlefield. He loves his son too, you know! Many of the immortals have sons fighting before Troy, and you will hake them all very jealous. ...”

The Father of men and gods agreed that this was right. But he sent a shower of bloody raindrops upon the earth in honour of his dear son, whom Patroclus was destined to kill on Trojan soil, far from his native land.

When they were within reach, Patroclus struck Thrasymelos, Sarpedon’s man, in the lower belly, and brought him down. Sarpedon cast at Patroclus and missed, but he hit the horse Pedasos in the right shoulder. ...

The two men now came together again for their battle. Sarpedon cast, and the spear passed over Patroclus’s left shoulder without touching. Patroclus followed up, and there was no mistake about his cast: he struck where the midriff encloses the beating heart. Sarpedon fell, as an oak tree falls or a poplar, or a tall pine felled by a woodman to make a ship’s mast: so he lay in front of his horses and chariot, moaning and clutching at the bloody dust. ...

* Sarpedon is the mortal son of Zeus and king of Lycia, a region in southwest Anatolia allied with Troy. Here, his Lycian contingent is fighting the Greeks alongside the Trojans.

[Dying, Sarpedon charges his friend Glaucos to avenge him and prevent his body being stripped of his armor. Glaucos is wounded, but he prays to Apollo to be healed so he can fight for Sarpedon, and his prayer is granted.]

First Glaucos went round urging the Lycian leaders to fight for Sarpedon. Then he repaired at a good pace to the Trojans, Polydamos and Panthoides and Agenor, Aeneias* and Hector the mighty man himself, calling upon them in plain words:

“Look here, Hector! you have quite forgotten your allies. They wear themselves out for your sake, far from home and friends, and you will not help them. Sarpedon lies dead! the leader of the Lycian spearmen, who ruled his country with justice and his own strong arm. Brazen Ares has brought him down by the spear of Patroclus! Do stand by us, friends! Let your hearts be moved with indignation! Do not suffer the Myrmidons to strip him and maltreat his body, in revenge for the Danaans whom we have killed in fair fight beside their own ships!” ...

[Hector leads the furious Trojans against the Greeks, but Patroclus rallies the Greeks into an equal passion.]

When both sides were there in force, Trojans and Lycians against Myrmidons and Achaians, they joined battle with terrible shouts, and how their weapons crashed and smashed! Then Zeus drew a dreadful darkness over the conflict, that the battle for his son might be dreadful and desperate.

At first the Trojans drove back their enemies. For a man was struck down who was by no means the least among the Myrmidons—Epeigeus, the son of prince Agacles. Epeigeus once had been ruler of Budeion but he had killed one of his cousins and took refuge with Peleus and Thetis Silverfoot. They sent him to the war at Ilios along with Achilles. He was taking hold of the dead man, when Hector smashed skull and helmet with a large stone; he fell dead over the body.

Then Patroclus provoked by his comrade's loss rushed at him straight, like a hawk scattering daws and starlings. ...

[The Trojans fall back, only to wheel and pounce on the Greeks when they follow.]

Now not even a man who knew him well could have known the noble Sarpedon, smothered from head to foot in blood and dust and showers of shafts. The crowds of men struggled about the body, like a swarm of flies buzzing about a farmyard in spring-time, when the milk runs over the pails and the bowls are doused with milk.

And all the while Zeus did not turn away his eyes from the battle. ... At last he thought it best that Patroclus should kill yet more; and drive Hector back to the city walls.

So first he made Hector's courage fail. Hector entered his car and turned to retreat, calling on the Trojans to follow—he knew the sacred scales of Zeus! Then not even the brave Lycians stood firm, but all fled away, now they had seen their king lying pierced through the heart in the heap of corpses—for many had fallen over him at the time when Cronion tightened the strife. But the others tore the shining armour from Sarpedon's shoulders, and Patroclus sent it away to the camp. ...

Now Patroclus ordered Automedon to drive him after the Trojans and Lycians. Poor fool! he was quite blinded. If he had done as Achilles told him, he could have escaped black death. But always the will of Zeus is stronger than man; and Zeus put that temper into his heart. ...

And then the Achaians would have taken the proud city of Troy by the valour of Patroclus, for he went onwards like a storm: but Apollo stood on the wall to help the Trojans, intent upon Patroclus's death. Three times did Patroclus set his foot on a corner of the wall, three times Apollo dooled him back, rapping the shield with his immortal hands. When he tried the fourth time like one more than man, Apollo shouted at him and said in plain words:

“Back, prince Patroclus! It is not fated that proud Troy shall fall to your spear, nor to Achilles, who is a much better man than you.”

Then Patroclus fell back a long way, in fear of the wrath of Apollo Shootafar.

But Hector checked his horses at the Scaian Gate; for he was in doubt whether to drive into battle again, or recall his army to take shelter within the walls. As he was considering, Apollo appeared by his side, in the form of a lusty young fellow Asios, who was Hector's own uncle, being brother of Hebe, and the son of Dymas who lived near the Sangarios in Phrygia. Apollo said then, in the shape of this man:

“Why have you left the battle, Hector? You ought not to do it. ... Hurry—make for Patroclus, and you may get him—Apollo may give you victory!”

As Apollo disappeared into the melee, Hector told Cebriotes to whip the horses into battle. Apollo turned the Argives to flight and made the Trojans prevail; but Hector left the others alone and drove towards Patroclus. Then Patroclus leapt out of his car, holding the spear in his left hand; he picked up with his right a sharp shining stone just large enough to his hand. He did not try to keep clear of the fellow

* The Trojan Aeneias, or Aeneas, was identified much later by the Romans as the legendary founder of Rome.

now—he threw with all his might, and his shot was not wasted, for it hit Cebriones (himself a bastard son of Priam) on the forehead, as he held the reins. The stone crushed both brows into one and smashed the bone, and both eyes fell down in the dust in front of him. He rolled out of the car like a tumbler, and Patroclus said in mockery:

“Blest my soul, there’s a springheel! What a neat header he takes! If he were at sea he could fill many hungry bellies by diving for sea-urchins. He would jump overboard in any weather, to judge from that excellent dive overcar on land! I didn’t know there were divers in Troy!”

He pounced on Cebriones like a lion which ravages the fold, until he is run through the chest and his own courage is his destruction: ah Patroclus, that was what came of your leap! And Hector leapt from his car to meet him: and there they fought as two lions fight over a deer’s body, both hungry, both furious—there Patroclus Menoitiades and glorious Hector were ready to tear each other to pieces. Hector laid hold of the head and would not let go, Patroclus held fast by the foot—and the two armies behind them were fighting too. It was like the struggle of East Wind and South Wind to shake the trees in a mountain dimble—oak and ash and smooth-barked cornel. How they beat the long boughs together with rare great noise! What a crashing of cracking trunks! So Trojans and Danaans dashed together, dealing death, and neither thought of retreat. Round the body of Cebriones the sharp spears fell thick, the winged arrows flew from the string; showers of big stones battered the shields of the fighting men; and the dead man amid the whirlwind of dust lay grand in his own grandeur, forgetful of his horsemanship.

So long as the sun bestrode the middle sky those death-dealing showers went on from this side and that; but when the sun took his turn to ox-loosing time, the Achaians became stronger beyond measure. They dragged away the body of Cebriones, and stript his armour, and Patroclus turned upon the Trojans again. Thrice he leapt on them like another god of war with awful shouts, thrice nine men he killed: but at the fourth furious attack—ah then, Patroclus, the end of your life was in sight! for Phoibos Apollo was there in all his terrors.

Patroclus did not see him coming, for the god was hidden in Host. He stood behind Patroclus: his eyes rolled in rage, and he slapped him between the shoulders with the flat of the hand. The helmet was knocked from his head, and went rolling and rattling under the horses’ feet; the plumes were dabbled in blood and dust. ... Patroclus felt the spear in his hand broken to pieces; the great strong heavy-bladed spear, the tasselled shield with its belt fell from his

shoulders; the corselet was stript off his body by the great son of Zeus. His mind was blinded, his knees crickled under him, he stood there dazed.

Then from behind a spear hit him between shoulders [thrown by the Trojan Euphorbos]. ...

When Hector saw him retreating and wounded, he came near and stabbed him in the belly: the blade ran through, he fell with a dull thud, and consternation took the Achaians. ... And then he vaunted his victory without disguise:

“So Patroclus, you thought that you could sack our city! you thought you would rob our women of the day of freedom, and carry them off to your own country! Fool! ... Ah, poor wretch, your Achilles is a good man, but he was no help to you, although no doubt he warned you earnestly when you started (and he stayed behind)—‘Don’t come back to me, my brave Patroclus, until you have stript the blood-stained shirt from Hector’s body!’ No doubt he must have said that, and you thought you could do it—no more sense in you than that!”

Patroclus replied, half fainting:

“For this once, Hector, make your proud boast, for you are the victor, by help of Zeus Cronides and Apollo, who mastered me—an easy thing: they stript off my armour themselves. But if twenty men like you had confronted me, my spear would have slain them all on the spot. No, it was cruel fate that killed me, and Leto’s son,* and of men Euphorbos; you come third and take my armour. One thing I tell you, and you should lay it up in your mind: you have yourself not long to live. Already death and fate are beside you, and Achilles Aiacidēs shall lay you low.”

Even as he spoke, the shadow of death covered him up. His soul left the body and went down to Hades, bewailing his lot, cut off in his manhood and strength. But Hector answered him though dead:

“What is this prophecy of certain death to me, Patroclus? Achilles may be the son of the divine Thetis, but who knows if I may not strike with my spear, and he may be the first to die!”

Then he set one foot upon the body, and treading it away from the spear, pulled out the spear, and went at once with the spear after the driver Automedon. He wanted to kill him too; but the immortal horses which the gods had given to Achilles’s father Peleus were carrying him out of the way.

* Leto is the mother of Apollo.

Agamemnon's Insult*

The Iliad, Book 1—Agamemnon has taken the daughter of Chryses, a priest of Apollo, hostage and refused to accept a ransom, causing the priest to pray to Apollo for vengeance.

The wrath sing, goddess, of Peleus's son Achilles, the accursed wrath which brought countless sorrows upon the Achaeans, and sent down to Hades many valiant souls of warriors, and made the men themselves to be the spoil for dogs and birds of every kind; and thus the will of Zeus was brought to fulfillment. Of this sing from the time when first there parted in strife Atreus's son, lord of men,† and noble Achilles. ...

[The priest's prayer causes Apollo to rain down pestilence among the Greeks.]

For nine days the missiles of the god ranged through the army, but on the tenth Achilles called the army to the place of assembly, for the goddess, white-armed Hera, had put it in his heart; for she pitied the Danaans because she saw them dying. So, when they were assembled and met together, among them rose and spoke Achilles, swift of foot:

"Son of Atreus, now I think we shall be driven back and return home, our plans thwarted—if we should escape death, that is—if indeed war and pestilence alike are to subdue the Achaeans. But come, let us ask some seer or priest, or some reader of dreams—for a dream too is from Zeus—who might tell us why Phoebus Apollo has conceived such anger, whether it is because of a vow that he blames us, or a hecatomb;‡ in the hope that perhaps he may accept the savor of lambs and unblemished goats, and be minded to ward off destruction from us."

When he had thus spoken he sat down, and among them rose up Calchas, son of Thestor, far the best of diviners, who had knowledge of all things that were, and that were to be, and that had been before, and who had guided the ships of the Achaeans to Ilios by the gift of prophecy that Phoebus Apollo had granted him. He with good intent addressed their assembly and spoke among them:

"Achilles, dear to Zeus, you ask me to declare the wrath of Apollo, who smites from afar. ... It is not because of a vow that he blames us, nor a hecatomb, but because of the priest whom Agamemnon dishonored, and did not release his daughter nor

accept the ransom. For this reason the god who strikes from afar has given woes, and will continue to give them, nor will he drive off from the Danaans loathsome destruction until we give back to her father the bright-eyed maiden, unbought, unransomed, and take a holy hecatomb to Chryse; then perhaps we might appease his wrath and persuade him."

When he had thus spoken, he sat down, and among them rose the warrior, son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, deeply vexed; and with rage was his black heart wholly filled, and his eyes were like blazing fire. To Calchas first of all he spoke, and his look threatened trouble:

"Prophet of evil, never yet have you given me a favorable prophecy; always it is dear to your heart to prophesy evil, and no word of good have you ever yet spoken or brought to fulfillment. And among the Danaans in assembly you utter your prophecies, and declare that it is for this reason that the god who strikes from afar is bringing woes on them, because I would not accept the glorious ransom for the girl, the daughter of Chryses, since I would far rather keep her at home. For in fact I prefer her to Clytemnestra, my wedded wife, since she is in no way inferior to her, either in form or in stature, or in mind, or in handiwork. But even so I am minded to give her back if that is better; I would rather have the army safe than perishing. But for me make ready a prize at once, so that I may not be the only one of the Argives without a prize, since that is not right; for you all see this, that my prize goes from me elsewhere."

Then in answer to him spoke noble Achilles, swift of foot:

"Most glorious son of Atreus, most covetous of all men, how shall the great-hearted Achaeans give you a prize? We know nothing of any wealth laid up in common store, but whatever we took by pillage from the cities has been distributed, and it is not right to take this back from the men. Do you give her up at the god's command, and we Achaeans will recompense you threefold and fourfold, if ever Zeus grants us to sack the well-walled city of Troy."

Then in answer to him lord Agamemnon spoke:

"Do not in this way, valiant though you are, godlike Achilles, try to deceive me by your cleverness, for you will not outstrip me nor persuade me. Do you really intend, so long as you yourself keep your prize, that I sit here like this lacking one, since you ask me to give her back? Let the great-hearted Achaeans give me a prize, suiting it to my heart so that the recompense is equal! But if they do not give it, then I will come myself and take your prize, or that of Aias, or that of Odysseus I will seize and carry off. Angry will he be, to whomever I come. But of these things

* Translation: A. T. Murray (1924).

† Agamemnon, the overlord of the Greek armies.

‡ A sacrifice of 100 cattle; was Apollo demanding one?

we will take thought later on; now let us launch a black ship into the bright sea, and man it with a due number of rowers, and place on board a hecatomb, and embark on it the fair-cheeked daughter of Chryses herself. And let one that is a counselor take command, Aias, or Idomeneus, or noble Odysseus, or you, son of Peleus, of all men most daunting, that you may offer sacrifice and appease him who works from afar.”

Then with an angry glance Achilles swift of foot spoke to him:

“What, you clothed in shamelessness, you crafty of mind, how can any Achaean eagerly obey your words either to go on a journey or to do battle? I did not come here to fight because of the spearmen of Troy, since they are in no way at fault toward me. Never did they drive off my cattle or my horses, nor ever in deep-soiled Phthia, nourisher of men, did they lay waste the grain, for many things lie between us—shadowy mountains and sounding sea. But you, shameless one, we followed here in order to please you, seeking to win recompense for Menelaus and for you, dog-face, from the Trojans. This you do not regard or take thought of; and you even threaten that you will yourself take from me the prize for which I toiled much, and the sons of the Achaeans gave it to me. Never do I have a prize like yours, when the Achaeans sack a well-peopled city of the Trojans; my hands bear the brunt of tumultuous battle, but when the distribution comes, your prize is far greater, while I go to my ships with some small thing, yet my own, when I have grown weary with fighting. Now I will go to Phthia, since it is far better to return home with my beaked ships, nor do I intend, while without honor here, to pile up goods and wealth for you.”

Then answered him Agamemnon, the lord of men: “Flee then, if your heart is set on it; I am not begging you to stay for my sake. With me are others that will do me honor, and above all Zeus, the lord of counsel. Most hateful to me are you of the kings, nurtured by Zeus, for always is strife dear to you, and wars and battles. If you are most powerful, a god, I think, gave you this. Go home with your ships and your men, and lord it over your Myrmidons;* for you I care not, nor am I concerned about your anger. And this will be my threat to you: since Phoebus Apollo takes from me the daughter of Chryses, her with a ship of mine and men of mine I will send back, but I will myself come to your hut and take the fair-cheeked Briseis, that prize of yours, so that you may well know how much mightier I am than you, and another too may shrink from declaring himself my equal and likening himself to me to my face.”

So he spoke, and grief came upon the son of Peleus, and within his shaggy breast his heart was divided in counsel, whether he should draw his sharp sword from his side and break up the assembly, and kill the son of Atreus, or whether he should check his wrath and curb his spirit. While he pondered this in his mind and heart, and was drawing his great sword from its sheath, Athene came from heaven, sent by the goddess, white-armed Hera, for in her heart she loved them both alike and cared for them. She stood behind him, and caught the son of Peleus by his tawny hair, allowing herself to be seen by him alone, and of the rest no one saw her. ...

“I have come from heaven to put a stop to your anger, if you will listen, and the goddess, white-armed Hera, sent me, for in her heart she loves you both alike, and cares for you. Come now, cease from strife, and let not your hand draw your sword. With words indeed taunt him with what will happen; for thus I will speak, and surely this thing will come to pass: one day three times as many glorious gifts will be yours on account of this insult. Restrain yourself, therefore, and obey us.” ...

[Athena departs, and Achilles taunts Agamemnon:]

“You heavy with wine, with the face of a dog but the heart of a deer, never have you dared to arm yourself for battle with your troops, or to go into an ambush with the chief men of the Achaeans. That seems to you to be death. It is surely far better to take back the gifts of whoever through the wide camp of the Achaeans speaks in opposition to you. People-devouring king, since you rule over nobodies! Otherwise, son of Atreus, you would now be committing your final outrage.

“But I will speak frankly to you, and will swear a mighty oath on it: by this staff here—that will never again put out leaves or shoots since it first left its stump in the mountains, nor will it again grow green, for the bronze has stripped it of leaves and bark, and now the sons of the Achaeans that give judgment bear it in their hands, those who guard the laws that come from Zeus; and this shall be for you a mighty oath—surely some day longing for Achilles will come on the sons of the Achaeans one and all, and on that day you will in no way be able to help them for all your grief, when many will be laid low at the hands of man-slaying Hector. But you will gnaw your heart within you in wrath that you did not at all honor the best of the Achaeans.”

* Achilles’s own people, whose warriors he led to Troy.

Odysseus and the Suitors*

The Odyssey, Book 22—Odysseus has returned home to Ithaca after many long years of wandering only to find that his home is overrun by young noblemen courting Penelope (the chief of whom being Antinoös), who is patiently awaiting Odysseus's return. Odysseus first scouts out the situation in disguise as a beggar.

Now Odysseus stript off his rags, and leapt upon the great doorstone, holding the bow and the quiver of arrows. He spread the arrows before his feet, and called aloud to the company:

“So the great game is played! and now for another mark, which no man has ever hit: I will see if Apollo will hear my prayer and let me strike it.”

Then he let fly straight at Antinoös: he was holding a large golden goblet in both hands, and was about to lift it for a drink. Bloodshed was not in his thoughts; who could imagine at the festal board, that one man amongst many, even if he were very strong, would bring certain death upon his own head? The arrow struck him in the throat, and the point ran through the soft neck. He sank to the other side, and the goblet dropt from his hands. In an instant a thick jet of blood spouted from his nostrils; he pushed the table away with a quick jerk of his feet, spilling all the vittles on the ground—meat and bread in a mess.

Then there was a great uproar all through the place as they saw the man fall; they leapt up from their seats in excitement and looked all round at the walls, but there was neither shield nor spear to be seen. They shouted angrily at Odysseus—

“You shall pay for shooting a man! No more games for you: now your death is a safe thing! You have killed the best fellow in Ithaca, and so the vultures shall eat you here!”

They were just guessing—they never dreamt that he intended to kill the man. Poor fools! they did not know that the cords of death were made fast about them all. But Odysseus said with a frowning face:

“Dogs! you thought would never come back from Troy, so you have been carving up my substance, forcing the women to lie with you, courting my wife before I was dead, not fearing the gods who rule the broad heavens, nor the execration of man which follows you for ever. And now the cords of death are made fast about you all!”

Then pale fear seized upon them. Eurymachos alone dared to answer:

“If you are really Ithacan Odysseus come back, what you have said is just and right. Plenty of wild doings here, plenty more on your farms! But there lies the guilty man, Antinoös, who is answerable for everything. He was the ringleader; a wife was not what he wanted, not so much as something else, which Cronion† has not allowed him to do. He wished to murder your son by a secret assault, and to be sole lord and master in this fine country of Ithaca.

“Now he has his deserts and lies dead. Sir, spare your own people! We will make it all good, all that has been consumed, all the wine that has been drunk in this hall; there shall be a public collection, and each man severally will pay twenty oxen in compensation, and bring gold and bronze to your heart's content. Till that is done no one could blame you for being angry.”

Odysseus answered with a frowning face:

“Eurymachos, not if you would give me your whole estates, all you now possess, and more if you could get it; not even so, would I stay my hand from killing until every man of you shall have paid in full for his outrageous violence. Now the choice lies before you, fight or flight, if you wish to save your lives; but I do not think any one of you will escape sudden death.”

As they listened, their knees gave way beneath them and despair entered their hearts. But Eurymachos once more spoke:

“My friends,” he cried out, “this man will not hold his hands—he thinks he is invincible. He has bow and arrows, and he will shoot from the doorway until he has killed us all! Let us fight for it! Draw your swords and put up the tables to fend off his arrows; have at him all together; see if we can't push away from the door, and get out and make a hue and cry in the town! Then this man will soon shoot his last shot!”

With this he drew a good sharp blade from his side, and leapt at Odysseus with a yell; but on the instant Odysseus let fly an arrow and struck him in the chest by the nipple. The sharp point pierced his liver; down fell the sword from his hand, he doubled up and fell sprawling over a table, vittles and cup went scattering over the floor; he beat his brow on the ground in agony, his feet kicked out and knocked over the chair, and a mist came over his eyes.

* Translated by W. H. D. Rouse, 1946.

† Zeus, son of Cronos.

On Labor*

From *Works and Days* (c.700 BCE)—Hesiod is teaching the proper approach to farming to his brother Perses, who has squandered the half of their father's estate left to him, and now wants the other half, held by Hesiod. Hesiod prefers to give him advice instead.

(ll. 293-319) That man is altogether best who considers all things himself and marks what will be better afterwards and at the end; and he, again, is good who listens to a good adviser; but whoever neither thinks for himself nor keeps in mind what another tells him, he is an unprofitable man. But do you at any rate, always remembering my charge, work, high-born Perses, that Hunger may hate you, and venerable Demeter richly crowned may love you and fill your barn with food; for Hunger is altogether a meet comrade for the sluggard. Both gods and men are angry with a man who lives idle, for in nature he is like the stingless drones who waste the labour of the bees, eating without working; but let it be your care to order your work properly, that in the right season your barns may be full of victual. Through work men grow rich in flocks and substance, and working they are much better loved by the immortals. Work is no disgrace: it is idleness which is a disgrace. But if you work, the idle will soon envy you as you grow rich, for fame and renown attend on wealth. And whatever be your lot, work is best for you, if you turn your misguided mind away from other men's property to your work and attend to your livelihood as I bid you. An evil shame is the needy man's companion, shame which both greatly harms and prospers men: shame is with poverty, but confidence with wealth.

(ll. 370-372) Let the wage promised to a friend be fixed; even with your brother smile—and get a witness; for trust and mistrust, alike ruin men.

(ll. 373-375) Do not let a flaunting woman coax and cozen and deceive you: she is after your barn. The man who trusts womankind trust deceivers.

(ll. 376-380) There should be an only son, to feed his father's house, for so wealth will increase in the home; but if you leave a second son you should die old. Yet Zeus can easily give great wealth to a greater number. More hands mean more work and more increase.

(ll. 381-382) If your heart within you desires wealth, do these things and work with work upon work.

(ll. 383-404) When the Pleiades, daughters of Atlas, are rising [early in May], begin your harvest, and your ploughing when they are going to set [November]. Forty nights and days they are hidden and appear again as the year moves round, when first you sharpen your sickle. This is the law of the plains, and of those who live near the sea, and who inhabit rich country, the glens and dingles far from the tossing sea,—strip to sow and strip to plough and strip to reap, if you wish to get in all Demeter's fruits in due season, and that each kind may grow in its season. Else, afterwards, you may chance to be in want, and go begging to other men's houses, but without avail; as you have already come to me. But I will give you no more nor give you further measure. Foolish Perses! Work the work which the gods ordained for men, lest in bitter anguish of spirit you with your wife and children seek your livelihood amongst your neighbours, and they do not heed you. Two or three times, may be, you will succeed, but if you trouble them further, it will not avail you, and all your talk will be in vain, and your word-play unprofitable. Nay, I bid you find a way to pay your debts and avoid hunger.

(ll. 405-413) First of all, get a house, and a woman and an ox for the plough—a slave woman and not a wife, to follow the oxen as well—and make everything ready at home, so that you may not have to ask of another, and he refuses you, and so, because you are in lack, the season pass by and your work come to nothing. Do not put your work off till to-morrow and the day after; for a sluggish worker does not fill his barn, nor one who puts off his work: industry makes work go well, but a man who putts off work is always at hand-grips with ruin.

(ll. 695-705) Bring home a wife to your house when you are of the right age, while you are not far short of thirty years nor much above; this is the right age for marriage. Let your wife have been grown up four years, and marry her in the fifth. Marry a maiden, so that you can teach her careful ways, and especially marry one who lives near you, but look well about you and see that your marriage will not be a joke to your neighbors. For a man wins nothing better than a good wife, and, again, nothing worse than a bad one, a greedy soul who roasts her man without fire, strong though he may be, and brings him to a raw old age.

* Translation: Hugh G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classics, 1914.

The Founding of Cyrene*

The founding of Cyrene, on the Libyan coast of North Africa due south of Greece, took place c. 630 BCE by colonists from the island of Thera in the Aegean.

Herodotus, *The History*, c. 430 BCE

Grinus (they say), the son of Aesanius, a descendant of Theras, and king of the island of Thera, went to Delphi to offer a hecatomb on behalf of his native city. On Grinus consulting the oracle about sundry matters, the Pythoness gave him for answer, "that he should found a city in Libya." When the embassy returned to Thera, small account was taken of the oracle, as the Therans were quite ignorant where Libya was.

Seven years passed from the utterance of the oracle, and not a drop of rain fell in Thera: all the trees in the island, except one, were killed with the drought. After a while, everything began to go wrong. Ignorant of the cause of their sufferings, they again sent to Delphi to inquire for what reason they were afflicted. The Pythoness in reply reminded them reproachfully "that if they and Battus would make a settlement at Cyrene in Libya, things would go better with them." So, as there was no help for it, they sent messengers to Crete, to inquire whether any of the Cretans, or of the strangers living amongst them, had ever travelled as far as Libya: and these messengers fell in with a man named Corobius, a dealer in purple dye. In answer to their inquiries, he told them that contrary winds had once carried him to Libya, where he had gone ashore on a certain island which was named Platea. So they hired this man's services, and took him back with them to Thera. A few persons then sailed from Thera to reconnoiter. Guided by Corobius to the island of Platea, they left him there with provisions for a certain number of months, and returned home with all speed to give their countrymen an account of the island.

The Therans who had left Corobius at Platea, when they reached Thera, told their countrymen that they had colonized an island on the coast of Libya. They of Thera, upon this, resolved that men should be sent to join the colony from each of their seven districts, and that the brothers in every family should draw lots to determine who were to go. Upon this the Therans

sent out Battus with two penteconters, and with these he proceeded to Libya; but within a little time, not knowing what else to do, the men returned and arrived back off Thera. The Therans, when they saw the vessels approaching, received them with showers of missiles, would not allow them to come near the shore, and ordered the men to sail back from whence they came. Thus compelled, they settled on Platea.

In this place they continued two years, but at the end of that time, as their ill luck still followed them, they went in a body to Delphi, where they made complaint at the shrine to the effect that they prospered as poorly as before. Hereon the Pythoness made them the following answer: "Know you better than I, fair Libya abounding in fleeces? Better the stranger than he who has trod it? Oh! Clever Therans!" Battus and his friends, when they heard this, sailed back to Platea: it was plain the god would not hold them acquitted of the colony till they were absolutely in Libya. So they made a settlement on the mainland directly opposite Platea, fixing themselves at a place called Aziris.

Here they remained six years, at the end of which time the Libyans induced them to move, promising that they would lead them to a better situation. So the Greeks left Aziris and were conducted by the Libyans towards the west, their journey being so arranged, by the calculation of their guides, that they passed in the night the most beautiful district of that whole country, which is the region called Irasa. The Libyans brought them to a spring, which goes by the name of Apollo's Fountain, and told them, "Here, Hellenes, is the proper place for you to settle; for here the sky leaks."

During the lifetime of Battus, the founder of the colony, who reigned forty years, and during that of his son Arcesilaus, who reigned sixteen, the Cyreneans continued at the same level, neither more nor fewer in number than they were at the first. But in the reign of the third king, Battus, surnamed the Happy, the advice of the Pythoness brought Greeks from every quarter into Libya, to join the settlement. Thus a great multitude were collected together to Cyrene, and the Libyans of the neighborhood found themselves stripped of large portions of their lands.

Strabo, *Geographia*, c. 20 CE

Cyrene was founded by the inhabitants of Thera, a Lacedaemonian island which was formerly called Calliste, as Callimachus says: Calliste once its name, but Thera in later times, the mother of my home, famed for its steeds. The harbor of Cyrene is situated opposite to Criu-Metopon, the western cape of Crete, distant 2000 stadia. The passage is made with a

* From: Herodotus, *The History*, George Rawlinson, trans., (New York: Dutton & Co., 1862); Book IV; Fred Morrow Fling, ed., *A Source Book of Greek History*, (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1907), pp. 38-39.

south-southwest wind. Cyrene is said to have been founded by Battus, whom Callimachus claims to have been his ancestor. The city flourished from the excellence of the soil, which is peculiarly adapted for breeding horses, and the growth of fine crops.

VARIOUS WRITERS

Accounts of Hellenic Religious Beliefs*

Homer: The Iliad, c. 800 BCE

And they did sacrifice each man to one of the everlasting gods, praying for escape from death and the tumult of battle. But Agamemnon, king of men, slew a fat bull of five years to most mighty Kronion, and called the elders, the princes of the Achaian host...Then they stood around the bull and took the barley meal, and Agamemnon made his prayer in their midst and said: "Zeus most glorious, most great god of the storm cloud, that lives in the heavens, make not the sun set upon us, nor the darkness come near, until I have laid low upon the earth Priam's palace smirched with smoke and burned the doorways thereof with consuming fire, and rent on Hector's breast his doublet, cleft with the blade; and about him may fall many of his comrades, prone in the dust, bite the earth." Now, when they had prayed and scattered the barley meal, they first drew back the bull's head and cut his throat and flayed him, and cut slices from the thighs and wrapped them in fat, making a double fold, and laid raw collops thereon. And these they burnt on cleft wood stripped of leaves, and spitted the vitals and held them over Hephaistos' flame. Now when the thighs were burnt and they had tasted the vitals, then sliced they all the rest and pierced it through with spits and roasted it carefully and drew all off again. So when they had rest from the task and had made ready the banquet, they feasted, nor was their heart stinted of the fair banquet....

Lysias: Against Nichomachos, c. 400 BCE

I am informed that he alleges that I am guilty of impiety in seeking to abolish the sacrifices. But if it were I who were law-making over this transcription of

our code, I should take it to be open to Nichomachos to make such a statement about me. But in fact I am merely claiming that he should obey the code established and patent to all and I am surprised at his not observing that, when he taxes me with impiety for saying that we ought to perform the sacrifices named in the tablets and pillars as directed in the regulations, he is accusing the city as well: for they are what you have decreed. And then, sir, if you feel these to be hard words, surely you must attribute grievous guilt to those citizens who used to sacrifice solely in accordance with the tablets. But of course, gentlemen of the jury, we are not to be instructed in piety by Nichomachos, but are rather to be guided by the ways of the past.

Now our ancestors, by sacrificing in accordance with the tablets, have handed down to us a city superior in greatness and prosperity to any other in Hellas; so that it behooves us to perform the same sacrifices as they did, if for no other reason than that of the success which has resulted from those rites. And how could a man show greater piety than mine, when I demand, first that our sacrifices be performed according to our ancestral rules, and second that they be those which tend to promote the interests of the city, and finally those which the people have decreed and which we shall be able to afford out of the public revenue? But you, Nichomachos, have done the opposite of this: by entering in your copy a greater number than had been ordained you have caused the public revenue to be expended on these, and hence to be deficient for our ancestral offerings.

Apollonius of Rhodes: Argonautica, c. 200 BCE

After this, fierce tempests arose for twelve days and nights together and kept them there from sailing. And above the golden head of Aison's son there hovered a halkyon prophesying with shrill voice the ceasing of the stormy winds; and Mopsus heard and understood the cry of the bird of the shore, fraught with good omen. And some god made it turn aside, and flying aloft it settled upon the stern-ornament of the ship. And the seer touched Jason as he lay wrapped in soft sheepskins and woke him at once, and thus spoke: "Son of Aison, you must climb to this temple on rugged Dindymos and propitiate the Mother of all the blessed Gods on her fair throne, and the stormy blasts shall cease. For such was the voice I heard but now from the halkyon, bird of the sea, which, as it flew above thee in thy slumber, told me all. For by her power the winds and the sea and all the earth below and the snowy seat of Olympus are complete; and to her, when from the mountains she

* From: Homer, *Homer's Iliad*, (London: J. Cornish & Sons, 1862); Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. John Dryden, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1910); Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*, trans. R. C. Seaton, (Cambridge, Mass.: Wm. Heinemann, 1912).

ascends the mighty heaven, Zeus himself, the son of Cronos, gives place. In like manner the rest of the immortal blessed ones reverence the dread goddess.”

Thus he spoke, and his words were welcome to Jason’s ear. And he arose from his bed with joy and woke all his comrades hurriedly and told them the prophecy of Mopsus the son of Ampycus. And quickly the younger men drove oxen from their stalls and began to lead them to the mountain’s lofty summit. And they loosed the hawsers from the sacred rock and rowed to the Thrakian harbor; and the heroes climbed the mountain, leaving a few of their comrades in the ship. Now there was a sturdy stump of vine that grew in the forest, a tree exceeding old; this they cut down, to be the sacred image of the mountain goddess; and Argos smoothed it skillfully, and they set it upon that rugged hill beneath a canopy of lofty oaks, which of all trees have their roots deepest. And near it they heaped an altar of small stones and wreathed their brows with oak leaves and paid heed invoking the mother of Dindymos, most venerable, dweller in Phrygia...And with many prayers did Aison’s son beseech the goddess to turn aside the stormy blasts as he poured libations on the blazing sacrifice; and at the same time by command of Orpheos the youths trod a measure dancing in full armor, and dashed with their swords on their shields, so that the ill-omened cry might be lost in the air—the wail which the people were still sending up in grief for their king.

Hence from that time forward the Phrygians propitiate the Great Mother with the wheel and the drum. The trees shed abundant fruit, and round their feet the earth of its own accord put forth flowers from the tender grass. And the beasts of the wild wood left their lairs and thickets and came up fawning on them with their tails. And she caused yet another marvel; for hitherto there was no flow of water on Dindymos, but then for them an unceasing stream gushed forth from the thirsty peak just as it was, and the dwellers around in after times called that stream, the spring of Jason....

Plutarch: Life of Aristides, c. 110 CE

21.1: And the Plataeans undertook to make funeral offerings annually for the Hellenes who had fallen in battle and lay buried there. And this they do yet unto this day, after the following manner. On the sixteenth of the month Maimacterion (which is the Boiotian Alakomenius), they celebrate a procession. This is led forth at break of day by a trumpeter sounding the signal for battle; wagons follow filled with myrtle-wreaths, then comes a black bull, then free-born youths carrying libations of wine and milk in jars, and pitchers of oil and myrrh (no slave may put hand to

any part of that ministration, because the men thus honored died for freedom); and following all, the chief magistrate of Plataea, who may not at other times touch iron or put on any other raiment than white, at this time is robed in a purple tunic, carries on high a water-jar from the city’s archive chamber, and proceeds, sword in hand, through the midst of the city to the graves; there he takes water from the sacred spring, washes off with his own hands the gravestones, and anoints them with myrrh; then he slaughters the bull at the funeral pyre, and, with prayers to Zeus and Hermes Terrestrial, summons the brave men who died for Hellas to come to the banquet and its copious drafts of blood; next he mixes a mixer of wine, drinks, and then pours a libation from it, saying these words: “I drink to the men who died for the freedom of the Hellenes.”

Plutarch: The Life of Theseos, c. 110 CE

The feast called Oschophoria, or the feast of boughs, which to this day the Athenians celebrate, was then first instituted by Theseos. For he took not with him the full number of virgins which by lot were to be carried away [to the Labyrinth], but selected two youths of his acquaintance, of fair and womanish faces, but of a manly and forward spirit, and having, by frequent baths, and avoiding the heat and scorching of the sun, with a constant use of all the ointments and washes and dresses that serve to the adorning of the head or smoothing the skin or improving the complexion, in a manner changed them from what they were before, and having taught them farther to counterfeit the very voice and carriage and gait of virgins so that there could not be the least difference perceived, he, undiscovered by any, put them into the number of the Athenian virgins designated for Crete. At his return, he and these two youths led up a solemn procession, in the same habit that is now worn by those who carry the vine-branches. Those branches they carry in honor of Dionysos and Ariadne, for the sake of their story before related; or rather because they happened to return in autumn, the time of gathering the grapes.

The women, whom they call Deipnopherai, or supper-carriers, are taken into these ceremonies, and assist at the sacrifice, in remembrance and imitation of the mothers of the young men and virgins upon whom the lot fell, for thus they ran about bringing bread and meat to their children; and because the women then told their sons and daughters many tales and stories, to comfort and encourage them under the danger they were going upon, it has still continued a custom that at this feast old fables and tales should be told. There was then a place chosen out, and a temple

erected in it to Theseos, and those families out of whom the tribute of the youth was gathered were appointed to pay tax to the temple for sacrifices to him. And the house of the Phytalidai had the overseeing of these sacrifices, Theseos doing them that honor in recompense of their former hospitality.

Plutarch: Life of Alcibiades, c. 110 CE

After the people had adopted this motion and all things were made ready for the departure of the fleet, there were some unpropitious signs and portents, especially in connection with the festival, namely, the Adonia. This fell at that time, and little images like dead folk carried forth to burial were in many places exposed to view by the women, who mimicked burial rites, beat their breasts, and sang dirges. Moreover, the mutilation of the Hermai, most of which, in a single night, had their faces and phalli disfigured, confounded the hearts of many, even among those who usually set small store by such things. They looked on the occurrence with wrath and fear, thinking it the sign of a bold and dangerous conspiracy. They therefore scrutinized keenly every suspicious circumstance, the council and the assembly convening for this purpose many times within a few days.

PLUTARCH

The Great Rhetra of Sparta*

From Life of Lycurgus of Sparta, 6—The orally established constitution of ancient Sparta, according to legend established by Lycurgus at the direction of the oracle at Delphi. It is preserved in Plutarch, who quotes the rhetra and an addition, which scholars call “the rider.” Plutarch is writing in the late 1st century CE; the rhetra dates from the Archaic period (8th or 7th century BCE).

So eager was Lycurgus for the establishment of this form of government, that he obtained an oracle from Delphi about it, which they call a ‘rhetra’. And this is the way it runs:

When thou has built a temple to Zeus Syllanios and Athena Syllania, divided the people into phylai, and divided them into ‘obai’, and established a Gerousia of thirty including the Archagetai, then from time to time ‘appellazein’ between Babyka and Knakion, and there

introduce and repeal measures; but the Demos must have the decision and the power.

In these clauses, the *phylai* and *obai* refer to divisions and distributions of the people into parts, some of which are named clans and others obes. By *Archagetai* the Kings are meant, and *appellazein* means ‘to assemble’ the people, and that the beginning and cause of the constitution was the Pythian. The *Babyka* is now called Cheimarros, and the *Knakion* the Oineus; but Aristotle says that the Knakion is a river and Babyka is a bridge. Between these they held their assemblies, having neither halls nor any other kind of building for the purpose. For thus Lycurgus thought that good counsel (*eubouleia*) was not promoted, but rather discouraged, since the serious purposes of an assembly were rendered foolish and futile by vain thoughts, as they gazed upon statues, and paintings, or scenic embellishments (‘proscenia of theaters’), or extravagantly decorated roofs of Bouleuteria. When the multitude was assembled thus, no one of them was permitted to make a motion, but the motion laid before them by the *Gerontes* and Kings could be accepted or rejected by the *Demos* [=popular assembly].

Later, however, when the Demos, by additions and subtractions perverted and distorted the sense of motions laid before them, the Kings Polydoros and Theopompos inserted the following clause in the Rhetra:

But if the Demos should choose badly, the Gerontes and Kings shall be ‘apostateres’—

That is, they should not ratify the vote, but dismiss and dissolve the Assembly outright, on the ground that it was perverting and changing the motion contrary to the best interests of the state. And they were actually able to persuade the city that the God authorized this addition to the Rhetra ... !

Here is a different translation of the Rhetra from Daniel Ogden:†

[I order you,] having founded a temple of Zeus Syllanios and Athene Syllania, having tribed [or preserved] the tribes and obeyed the obes, having established thirty as a council of elders together with the leaders/kings, from time to time to celebrate Apollo/hold assemblies between Babyka and Cnacion, thus to bring in and to set aside. Ultimate authority and power is to be the people’s.

[I order that] if the people speaks crookedly, the elders and leaders/kings be setters aside.

* Translated by John Dryden. From the Internet Classics Archive.

† Ogden, Daniel. “Crooked Speech: The Genesis of the Spartan Rhetra.” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 114 (1994), pp. 85-102.

The Spartan Polity*

Xenophon, an Athenian soldier of fortune who fought alongside the Spartans in the Corinthian War, wrote this treatise c. 375 BCE.

I recall the astonishment with which I first noted the unique position of Sparta among the states of Hellas, the relatively sparse population, and at the same time the extraordinary powers and prestige of the community. I was puzzled to account for the fact. It was only when I came to consider the peculiar institutions of the Spartans, that my wonderment ceased.

When we turn to Lycurgos, instead of leaving it to each member of the state privately to appoint a slave to be his son's tutor, he set over the young Spartans a public guardian—the paidonomos—with complete authority over them. This guardian was elected from those who filled the highest magistracies. He had authority to hold musters of the boys, and as their guardian, in case of any misbehavior, to chastise severely. Lycurgos further provided the guardian with a body of youths in the prime of life and bearing whips to inflict punishment when necessary, with this happy result, that in Sparta modesty and obedience ever go hand in hand, nor is there lack of either.

Instead of softening their feet with shoe or sandal, his rule was to make them hardy through going barefoot. This habit, if practiced, would, as he believed, enable them to scale heights more easily and clamber down precipices with less danger. In fact, with his feet so trained the young Spartan would leap and spring and run faster unshod than another in the ordinary way. Instead of making them effeminate with a variety of clothes, his rule was to habituate them to a single garment the whole year through, thinking that so they would be better prepared to withstand the variations of heat and cold. Again, as regards food, according to his regulation, the eiren, or head of the flock, must see that his messmates gather to the club meal with such moderate food as to avoid bloating and yet not remain unacquainted with the pains of starvation. His belief was that by such training in boyhood they would be better able when occasion demanded to continue toiling on an empty stomach....On the other hand, to guard against a too great pinch of starvation, he did give them permission

to steal this thing or that in the effort to alleviate their hunger.

Lycurgos imposed upon the bigger boys a special rule. In the very streets they were to keep their two hands within the folds of their coat; they were to walk in silence and without turning their heads to gaze, now here, now there, but rather to keep their eyes fixed upon the ground before them. And hereby it would seem to be proved conclusively that, even in the matter of quiet bearing and sobriety, the masculine type may claim greater strength than that which we attribute to the nature of women. At any rate, you might sooner expect a stone image to find voice than one of these Spartan youths...

When Lycurgos first came to deal with the question, the Spartans, like the rest of the Hellenes, used to mess privately at home. Tracing more than half the current problems to this custom, he was determined to drag his people out of holes and corners into the broad daylight, and so he invented the public mess rooms. As to food, his ordinance allowed them only so much as should guard them from want.....So that from beginning to end, till the mess breaks up, the common board is never stinted for food nor yet extravagantly furnished. So also in the matter of drink. While putting a stop to all unnecessary drink, he left them free to quench thirst when nature dictated.....Thus there is the necessity of walking home when a meal is over, and a consequent anxiety not to be caught tripping under the influence of wine, since they all know of course that the supper table must be presently abandoned and that they must move as freely in the dark as in the day, even with the help of a torch.

It is clear that Lycurgos set himself deliberately to provide all the blessings of heaven for the good man, and a sorry and ill-starred existence for the coward. In other states the man who shows himself base and cowardly, wins to himself an evil reputation and the nickname of a coward, but that is all. For the rest he buys and sells in the same marketplace with a good man; he sits beside him at a play; he exercises with him in the same gymnasium, and all as suits his humor. But at Sparta there is not one man who would not feel ashamed to welcome the coward at the common mess-tables or to try conclusions with him in a wrestling bout;....during games he is left out as the odd man;....during the choric dance he is driven away. Nay, in the very streets it is he who must step aside for others to pass, or, being seated, he must rise and make room, even for a younger man....

Lycurgos also provided for the continual cultivation of virtues even to old age, by fixing the election to the council of elders as a last ordeal at the goal of life, thus making it impossible for a high standard of

* From: Fred Fling, ed., *A Source Book of Greek History*, (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1907), pp. 66-75. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

virtuous living to be disregarded even in old age....Moreover he laid upon them, like some irresistible necessity, the obligation to cultivate the whole virtue of a citizen. Provided they duly perform the injunctions of the law, the city belonged to them each and all, in absolute possession, and on an equal footing....

I wish to explain with sufficient detail the nature of the covenant between king and state as instituted by Lycurgos; for this, I take it, is the sole type of rule which still preserves the original form in which it was first established; whereas other constitutions will be found either to have been already modified or else to be still undergoing modification at this moment. Lycurgos laid it down as law that the king shall offer on behalf of the state all public sacrifices, as being himself of divine descent, and wherever the state shall dispatch her armies the king shall take the lead. He granted him to receive honorary gifts of the things offered in sacrifice, and he appointed him choice land in many of the provincial cities, enough to satisfy moderate needs without excess of wealth. And in order that the kings might also encamp and mess in public he appointed them public quarters, and he honored them with a double portion each at the evening meal, not in order that they might actually eat twice as much as others, but that the king might have the means to honor whomsoever he wished. He also granted as a gift to each of the two kings to choose two mess-mates, which are called tuthioi. He also granted them to receive out of every litter of swine one pig, so that the king might never be at a loss for victims if he wished to consult the gods.

Close by the palace a lake affords an unrestricted supply of water; and how useful that is for various purposes they best can tell who lack the luxury. Moreover, all rise from their seats to give place to the king, save only that the ephors rise not from their throne of office. Monthly they exchange oaths, the ephors on behalf of the state, the king himself on his own behalf. And this is the oath on the king's part: "I will exercise my kingship in accordance with the established laws of the state." And on the part of the state (the ephors) the oath runs: "So long as he (who exercises kingship), shall abide by his oath we will not suffer his kingdom to be shaken."

HERODOTOS

The Spartan Way of Living*

Herodotos (book 7) presented this dialogue between Demaratos (a Spartan exile) and Xerxes, king of Persia. Xerxes followed Darius in power and continued the war against the Greeks. Herodotos tried to make clear to his readers the difference between people ruled by an autocratic Emperor and people ruled by laws—two very different forms of eunomia, or 'good order, accepted way of life.' Written c.440 BCE.

Xerxes sent for Demaratus the son of Ariston, who had accompanied him in his march upon Greece, and said to him:

"Demaratus, I would like you to tell me something. As I hear, you are a Greek and a native of a powerful city. Tell me, will the Greeks really fight against us? I think that even if all the Greeks and all the barbarians of the West were gathered together in one place, they would not be able to stop me, since they are so disunited. But I would like to know what you think about this."

Demaratus replied to Xerxes' question: "O king! Do you really want me to give a true answer, or would you rather that I make you feel good about all this?"

The king commanded him to speak the plain truth, and promised that he would not on that account hold him in less favour than before.

When he heard this promise, Demaratus spoke as follows: "O king! Since you command me to speak the truth, I will not say what will one day prove me a liar. Difficulties have at all times been present in our land, while Courage is an ally whom we have gained through wisdom and strict laws. Her aid enables us to solve problems and escape being conquered. All Greeks are brave, but what I am about to say does not concern all, but only the Spartans."

"First then, no matter what, the Spartans will never accept your terms. This would reduce Greece to slavery. They are sure to join battle with you even if all the rest of the Greeks surrendered to you. As for Spartan numbers, do not ask how many or few they are, hoping for them to surrender. For if a thousand of them should take the field, they will meet you in battle, and so will any other number, whether it is less than this, or more."

When Xerxes heard this answer of Demaratus, he laughed and answered: "What wild words, Demaratus! A thousand men join battle with such an army as mine! Come then, will you—who were once, as you say, their king—fight alone right now against

* trans. G. Rawlinson; revised, M. Markowski.

ten men? I think not. And yet, if your fellow-citizens really are as you say, then according to your laws as their king, you should be twice as tough and take on twenty all by yourself!”

But, if you Greeks, who think so highly of yourselves, are simply the size and kind of men as those I have seen at my court, or as yourself, Demaratus, then your bragging is weak. Use common sense: how could a thousand men, or ten thousand, or even fifty thousand—particularly if they are all free, and not under one lord—how could such a force stand against a united army like mine? Even if the Greeks have larger numbers than our highest estimate, we still would outnumber them 100 to 1.”

If they had a single master as our troops have, their obedience to him might make them courageous beyond their own desire, or they might be pushed onward by the whip against an enemy which far outnumbered them. But left to their own free choice, they will surely act differently. For my part, I believe that if the Greeks had to contend with the Persians only, and the numbers were equal on both sides, the Greeks would still find it hard to stand their ground. We too have men among us as tough as those you described—not many perhaps, but enough. For instance, some of my bodyguard would willingly engage singly with three Greeks. But this you did not know; and so you talked foolishly.”

Demaratus answered him- “I knew, O king, that if I told you the truth, I would displease you. But since you wanted the truth, I am telling you what the Spartans will do. I am not speaking out of any love that I have for Sparta—you know better than anyone how I feel about those who robbed me of my rank, of my ancestral honours, and made me a homeless exile.... Look, I am no match for ten men or even two, and given the choice, I would rather not fight at all. But if necessary, I would rather go against those who boast that they are a match for any three Greeks.”

“The same goes for the Spartans. One-against-one, they are as good as anyone in the world. But when they fight in a body, they are the best of all. For though they are free men, they are not entirely free. They accept Law as their master. And they respect this master more than your subjects respect you. Whatever he commands, they do. And his command never changes: It forbids them to flee in battle, whatever the number of their foes. He requires them to stand firm—to conquer or die. O king, if I seem to speak foolishly, I am content from this time forward to remain silent. I only spoke now because you commanded me to. I do hope that everything turns out according to your wishes.”

This was the answer of Demaratus, and Xerxes was not angry with him at all, but only laughed, and sent him away with words of kindness.

ARISTOTLE

On the Lacedaemonian Constitution*

Aristotle's assessment of the Sparta constitution dates from c. 340 BCE.

The Cretan constitution nearly resembles the Spartan, and in some few points is quite as good; but for the most part less perfect in form. The older constitutions are generally less elaborate than the later, and the Lacedaemonian is said to be, and probably is, in a very great measure, a copy of the Cretan. According to tradition, Lycurgus, when he ceased to be the guardian of King Charillus, went abroad and spent most of his time in Crete. For the two countries are nearly connected; the Lyctians are a colony of the Lacedaemonians, and the colonists, when they came to Crete, adopted the constitution which they found existing among the inhabitants The Cretan institutions resemble the Lacedaemonian. The Helots are the husbandmen of the one, the Perioeci of the other, and both Cretans and Lacedaemonians have common meals, which were anciently called by the Lacedaemonians not phiditia' but andria'; and the Cretans have the same word, the use of which proves that the common meals originally came from Crete. Further, the two constitutions are similar; for the office of the Ephors is the same as that of the Cretan Cosmi, the only difference being that whereas the Ephors are five, the Cosmi are ten in number. The elders, too, answer to the elders in Crete, who are termed by the Cretans the council. And the kingly office once existed in Crete, but was abolished, and the Cosmi have now the duty of leading them in war. All classes share in the ecclesia, but it can only ratify the decrees of the elders and the Cosmi.

The common meals of Crete are certainly better managed than the Lacedaemonian; for in Lacedaemon every one pays so much per head, or, if he fails, the law, as I have already explained, forbids him to exercise the rights of citizenship. But in Crete they are of a more popular character. There, of all the fruits of the earth and cattle raised on the public lands, and of

* From: Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (London: Colonial Press, 1900), pp. 30-49. Scanned by Jerome S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton.

the tribute which is paid by the Perioeci, one portion is assigned to the Gods and to the service of the state, and another to the common meals, so that men, women, and children are all supported out of a common stock. The legislator has many ingenious ways of securing moderation in eating, which he conceives to be a gain; he likewise encourages the separation of men from women, lest they should have too many children, and the companionship of men with one another—whether this is a good or bad thing I shall have an opportunity of considering at another time. But that the Cretan common meals are better ordered than the Lacedaemonian there can be no doubt. On the other hand, the Cosmi are even a worse institution than the Ephors, of which they have all the evils without the good. Like the Ephors, they are any chance persons, but in Crete this is not counterbalanced by a corresponding political advantage. At Sparta every one is eligible, and the body of the people, having a share in the highest office, want the constitution to be permanent. But in Crete the Cosmi are elected out of certain families, and not out of the whole people, and the elders out of those who have been Cosmi.

Some, indeed, say that the best constitution is a combination of all existing forms, and they praise the Lacedaemonian because it is made up of oligarchy, monarchy, and democracy, the king forming the monarchy, and the council of elders the oligarchy while the democratic element is represented by the Ephors; for the Ephors are selected from the people. Others, however, declare the Ephoralty to be a tyranny, and find the element of democracy in the common meals and in the habits of daily life. At Lacedaemon, for instance, the Ephors determine suits about contracts, which they distribute among themselves, while the elders are judges of homicide, and other causes are decided by other magistrates.

The license of the Lacedaemonian women defeats the intention of the Spartan constitution, and is adverse to the happiness of the state. For, a husband and wife being each a part of every family, the state may be considered as about equally divided into men and women; and, therefore, in those states in which the condition of the women is bad, half the city may be regarded as having no laws. And this is what has actually happened at Sparta; the legislator wanted to make the whole state hardy and temperate, and he has carried out his intention in the case of the men, but he has neglected the women, who live in every sort of intemperance and luxury. The consequence is that in such a state wealth is too highly valued, especially if the citizens fall under the dominion of their wives, after the manner of most warlike races, except the Celts and a few others who openly approve

of male loves. The old mythologer would seem to have been right in uniting Ares and Aphrodite, for all warlike races are prone to the love either of men or of women. This was exemplified among the Spartans in the days of their greatness; many things were managed by their women. But what difference does it make whether women rule, or the rulers are ruled by women? The result is the same. Even in regard to courage, which is of no use in daily life, and is needed only in war, the influence of the Lacedaemonian women has been most mischievous. The evil showed itself in the Theban invasion, when, unlike the women of other cities, they were utterly useless and caused more confusion than the enemy. This license of the Lacedaemonian women existed from the earliest times, and was only what might be expected.

For, during the wars of the Lacedaemonians, first against the Argives, and afterwards against the Arcadians and Messenians, the men were long away from home, and, on the return of peace, they gave themselves into the legislator's hand, already prepared by the discipline of a soldier's life (in which there are many elements of virtue), to receive his enactments. But, when Lycurgus, as tradition says, wanted to bring the women under his laws, they resisted, and he gave up the attempt. These then are the causes of what then happened, and this defect in the constitution is clearly to be attributed to them. We are not, however, considering what is or is not to be excused, but what is right or wrong, and the disorder of the women, as I have already said, not only gives an air of indecorum to the constitution considered in itself, but tends in a measure to foster avarice.

The mention of avarice naturally suggests a criticism on the inequality of property. While some of the Spartan citizens have quite small properties, others have very large ones; hence the land has passed into the hands of a few. And this is due also to faulty laws; for, although the legislator rightly holds up to shame the sale or purchase of an inheritance, he allows anybody who likes to give or bequeath it. Yet both practices lead to the same result. And nearly two-fifths of the whole country are held by women; this is owing to the number of heiresses and to the large dowries which are customary. It would surely have been better to have given no dowries at all, or, if any, but small or moderate ones. As the law now stands, a man may bestow his heiress on any one whom he pleases, and, if he die intestate, the privilege of giving her away descends to his heir. Hence, although the country is able to maintain 1500 cavalry and 30,000 hoplites, the whole number of Spartan citizens fell below 1000.

The result proves the faulty nature of their laws respecting property; for the city sank under a single defeat; the want of men was their ruin. There is a tradition that, in the days of their ancient kings, they were in the habit of giving the rights of citizenship to strangers, and therefore, in spite of their long wars, no lack of population was experienced by them; indeed, at one time Sparta is said to have numbered not less than 10,000 citizens. Whether this statement is true or not, it would certainly have been better to have maintained their numbers by the equalization of property. Again, the law which relates to the procreation of children is adverse to the correction of this inequality. For the legislator, wanting to have as many Spartans as he could, encouraged the citizens to have large families; and there is a law at Sparta that the father of three sons shall be exempt from military service, and he who has four from all the burdens of the state. Yet it is obvious that, if there were many children, the land being distributed as it is, many of them must necessarily fall into poverty.

The Lacedaemonian constitution is defective in another point; I mean the Ephoralty. This magistracy has authority in the highest matters, but the Ephors are chosen from the whole people, and so the office is apt to fall into the hands of very poor men, who, being badly off, are open to bribes. There have been many examples at Sparta of this evil in former times; and quite recently, in the matter of the Andrians, certain of the Ephors who were bribed did their best to ruin the state. And so great and tyrannical is their power, that even the kings have been compelled to court them, so that, in this way as well together with the royal office, the whole constitution has deteriorated, and from being an aristocracy has turned into a democracy. The Ephoralty certainly does keep the state together; for the people are contented when they have a share in the highest office, and the result, whether due to the legislator or to chance, has been advantageous. For if a constitution is to be permanent, all the parts of the state must wish that it should exist and the same arrangements be maintained. This is the case at Sparta, where the kings desire its permanence because they have due honor in their own persons; the nobles because they are represented in the council of elders (for the office of elder is a reward of virtue); and the people, because all are eligible to the Ephoralty. The election of Ephors out of the whole people is perfectly right, but ought not to be carried on in the present fashion, which is too childish. Again, they have the decision of great causes, although they are quite ordinary men, and therefore they should not determine them merely on their own judgment, but according to written rules, and to the laws. Their way of life, too, is not in accordance with the spirit of the constitution—they

have a deal too much license; whereas, in the case of the other citizens, the excess of strictness is so intolerable that they run away from the law into the secret indulgence of sensual pleasures.

Again, the council of elders is not free from defects. It may be said that the elders are good men and well trained in manly virtue; and that, therefore, there is an advantage to the state in having them. But that judges of important causes should hold office for life is a disputable thing, for the mind grows old as well as the body. And when men have been educated in such a manner that even the legislator himself cannot trust them, there is real danger. Many of the elders are well known to have taken bribes and to have been guilty of partiality in public affairs. And therefore they ought not to be irresponsible; yet at Sparta they are so. But (it may be replied), 'All magistracies are accountable to the Ephors.' Yes, but this prerogative is too great for them, and we maintain that the control should be exercised in some other manner. Further, the mode in which the Spartans elect their elders is childish; and it is improper that the person to be elected should canvass for the office; the worthiest should be appointed, whether he chooses or not. And here the legislator clearly indicates the same intention which appears in other parts of his constitution; he would have his citizens ambitious, and he has reckoned upon this quality in the election of the elders; for no one would ask to be elected if he were not. Yet ambition and avarice, almost more than any other passions, are the motives of crime.

Whether kings are or are not an advantage to states, I will consider at another time; they should at any rate be chosen, not as they are now, but with regard to their personal life and conduct. The legislator himself obviously did not suppose that he could make them really good men; at least he shows a great distrust of their virtue. For this reason the Spartans used to join enemies with them in the same embassy, and the quarrels between the kings were held to be conservative of the state.

Neither did the first introducer of the common meals, called 'phiditia,' regulate them well. The entertainment ought to have been provided at the public cost, as in Crete; but among the Lacedaemonians every one is expected to contribute, and some of them are too poor to afford the expense; thus the intention of the legislator is frustrated. The common meals were meant to be a popular institution, but the existing manner of regulating them is the reverse of popular. For the very poor can scarcely take part in them; and, according to ancient custom, those who cannot contribute are not allowed to retain their rights of citizenship.

The law about the Spartan admirals has often been censured, and with justice; it is a source of dissension, for the kings are perpetual generals, and this office of admiral is but the setting up of another king. The charge which Plato brings, in the *Laws*, against the intention of the legislator, is likewise justified; the whole constitution has regard to one part of virtue only—the virtue of the soldier, which gives victory in war. So long as they were at war, therefore, their power was preserved, but when they had attained empire they fell for of the arts of peace they knew nothing, and had never engaged in any employment higher than war. There is another error, equally great, into which they have fallen. Although they truly think that the goods for which men contend are to be acquired by virtue rather than by vice, they err in supposing that these goods are to be preferred to the virtue which gains them. ...

Enough respecting the Spartan constitution, of which these are the principal defects.

HERODOTUS

The Battle of Thermopylae

Herodotus, who not only invented the discipline of history but also told a great story, presented what happened at the Pass of Thermopylae in 480 B.C. The account of Thermopylae comes shortly after the dialogue between Demaratus and Xerxes (included above). Herodotus saw the logic of this relationship and so he came back to more dialogue between Demaratus and Xerxes concerning the Spartans here, near the end of Book 7.

While this debate was going on, Xerxes sent a mounted spy to observe the Greeks, to note how many they were, and see what they were doing. He had heard, before he came out of Thessaly, that a few men were assembled at this place, and that at their head were certain Spartans, under Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules. The horseman rode up to the camp, and looked about him, but did not see the whole army, since some were on the farther side of the wall (which had been rebuilt and was now carefully guarded). But he observed those on the outside, who were encamped in front of the rampart. It happened that at this time the Spartans held the outer guard, and were seen by the spy: some of them engaged in gymnastic exercises, others combing their long hair. At this the spy greatly marvelled, but he counted their number, and when he had taken accurate note of everything, he rode back quietly, for no one pursued after him, nor paid any attention to

his visit. So he returned, and told Xerxes all that he had seen.

Upon this, Xerxes, who had no means of knowing the truth—namely, that the Spartans were preparing to do or die manfully—but thought it laughable that they should be engaged in such things. He called to his presence Demaratus the son of Ariston, who still remained with the army. When he appeared, Xerxes told him all that he had heard, and questioned him concerning the news, since he was anxious to understand the meaning of such behaviour on the part of the Spartans.

Demaratus answered, “O king, I described these men to you long ago, when we had but just begun our march upon Greece. However, you laughed at me when I told you of all this, which I saw would come to pass. Earnestly I struggle at all times to speak truth to you, sire, and now listen to it once more. These men have come to dispute the pass with us. They are preparing for the fight. It is their custom, when they are about to risk their lives, to adorn their heads with care. Be assured, however, that if you can subdue the men who are here and the Lacedaemonians who remain in Sparta, there is no other nation in all the world which will venture to lift a hand in their defense. Now, you have to deal with the strongest kingdom and town in Greece, and with the bravest men.”

To Xerxes, what Demaratus had said seemed unbelievable, so he asked, “How it was possible for so small an army to contend with mine?”

“O king!” Demaratus answered, “Let me be treated as a liar if matters fall not out as I say.”

But Xerxes was not persuaded. Four whole days he waited, expecting that the Greeks would run away. On the fifth day, seeing the Spartans still manning the pass, he assumed that their stand was simply impudence and recklessness. Xerxes grew angry. He sent the Medes and Cissians against them with orders to take them alive and bring them into his presence. The Medes rushed forward and charged the Greeks, but fell in huge numbers. Others took the places of the slain, and would not be beaten off, though they suffered terrible losses. In this way it became clear to all, and especially to the king, that though he had plenty of combatants, he had but very few warriors. The struggle went on during the whole day.

Then the Medes, having met so rough a reception, withdrew from the fight. A band of Persians under Hydarnes, whom the king called his “Immortals,” took their place. Everyone believed that the Immortals would soon finish the Spartans. But when they joined battle with the Greeks, they did no better than the Medes: Since the two armies fought in a narrow

space, and the barbarians used shorter spears than the Greeks, there was no advantage in numbers. The Spartans fought in a way worthy of note, and showed themselves far more skilful in fight than their adversaries, often turning their backs, and making as though they were all fleeing, on which the barbarians would rush after them with much noise and shouting. When they caught up to the Spartans who were supposedly frightened, the Spartans would wheel around, face their pursuers, in this way destroy vast numbers of the enemy. Some Spartans likewise fell in these encounters, but only a very few. At last the Persians, finding that all their efforts to gain the pass failed, and that whether they attacked by divisions or in any other way, it was to no purpose, they withdrew to their own quarters.

During these assaults, it is said that Xerxes, who was watching the battle, thrice leaped from the throne on which he sat, in terror for his army.

Next day the combat was renewed, but with no better success on the part of the barbarians. The Greeks were so few that the barbarians hoped to find them disabled because of their wounds and ready to give up. So attacks continued. But the Greeks were drawn up in detachments according to their cities, and bore the brunt of the battle in turns— all except the Phocians, who had been stationed on the mountain to guard the pathway. So, when the Persians found no difference between that day and the preceding, they again retired to their quarters.

As the king was getting desperate and lacked a plan, Ephialtes, the son of Eurydemus, a man of Malis, came to him and was admitted to a conference. Stirred by the hope of receiving a rich reward at the king's hands, he had come to tell him of the pathway which led across the mountain to Thermopylae, by which disclosure he brought destruction on the band of Greeks who had there withstood the barbarians. This Ephialtes afterwards, from fear of the Spartans, fled into Thessaly....

The Greeks at Thermopylae received the first warning of the destruction which the dawn would bring on them from the seer Megistias, who read their fate in the victims as he was sacrificing. After this deserters came in, and brought the news that the Persians were marching around by the hills. It was still night when these men arrived. Last of all, the scouts came running down from the heights and brought in the same accounts at daybreak. The Greeks held a council to consider what they should do, and here opinions were divided: some were against quitting their post, while others contended to the contrary. So when the council had broken up, part of the troops departed and went their way homeward to

their cities, while part stayed, prepared to stand by Leonidas to the last.

It is said that Leonidas himself sent away the troops who departed because he cared about their safety, but thought it unseemly that either he or his Spartans should quit the post which they had been singled out to guard. For my own part, I incline to think that Leonidas gave the order, because he perceived the allies to be out of heart and unwilling to encounter the danger to which his own mind was made up. He therefore commanded them to retreat, but said that he himself could not draw back with honor, knowing that if he stayed, glory awaited him, and that Sparta in that case would not lose her prosperity. ...

To me it seems no small argument in favour of this view, that the seer also who accompanied the army, Megistias, the Acarnanian—said to have been of the blood of Melampus, and the same who was led by the appearance of the victims to warn the Greeks of the danger which threatened them—received orders to retire (as it is certain he did) from Leonidas, that he might escape the coming destruction. Megistias, however, though bidden to depart, refused, and stayed with the army; but he had an only son present with the expedition, whom he now sent away.

So the allies, when Leonidas ordered them to retire, obeyed him and departed immediately. Only the Thespians and the Thebans remained with the Spartans; and of these the Thebans were kept back by Leonidas as hostages, very much against their will. The Thespians, on the contrary, stayed entirely of their own accord, refusing to retreat, and declaring that they would not forsake Leonidas and his followers. So they lived with the Spartans, and died with them. Their leader was Demophilus, the son of Diadromes.

At sunrise Xerxes made libations, after which he waited until the time when the sun is full, and then began his advance. Ephialtes had instructed him that the descent of the mountain is much quicker, and the distance much shorter, than the way around the hills, and the ascent. So the barbarians under Xerxes began to come near, and the Greeks under Leonidas, as they now went forth determined to die, advanced much further than on previous days, until they reached the more open portion of the pass. Before, they had held their station within the wall, and from it had gone out to fight at the point where the pass was the narrowest. Now they joined battle beyond the defile and carried slaughter to the barbarians who fell in heaps. Behind them the captains of the squadrons, armed with whips, urged their men forward with continual blows. Many were pushed into the sea and perished. More still were trampled to death by their

own soldiers. No one heeded the dying. For the Greeks, reckless of their own safety and desperate, since they knew that the mountain had been crossed and their destruction was near, exerted themselves with the most furious valor against the barbarians.

By this time the spears of most Spartans were broken, so with their swords they hewed down the ranks of the Persians. Soon, Leonidas fell fighting bravely, together with many other famous Spartans whose names I have taken care to learn on account of their great worthiness, as indeed I have those of all the three hundred. There fell too at the same time very many famous Persians: among them, two sons of Darius, Abrocomes and Hyperanthes, his children by Phrtagune, the daughter of Artanes. Artanes was brother of King Darius, being a son of Hystaspes, the son of Arsames; and when he gave his daughter to the king, he made him heir likewise of all his substance, for she was his only child.

Thus two brothers of Xerxes here fought and fell. And now there arose a fierce struggle between the Persians and the Lacedaemonians over the body of Leonidas, in which the Greeks four times drove back the enemy, and at last by their great bravery succeeded in bearing off the body. This combat was scarcely ended when the Persians with Ephialtes approached. The Greeks, informed that they were coming, made a change in the manner of their fighting. Drawing back into the narrowest part of the pass, and retreating even behind the cross wall, they posted themselves upon a hillock, where they stood all drawn up together in one close body, except only the Thebans. That hill is at the entrance of the straits, where the stone lion stands which was set up in honor of Leonidas. Here they defended themselves to the last, such as still had swords using them, and the others resisting with their hands and teeth, until the barbarians, who in part had pulled down the wall and attacked them in front, in part had gone round and now encircled them upon every side, overwhelmed and buried the remnant which was left beneath showers of missile weapons.

Thus nobly did the whole body of Lacedaemonians and Thespians behave. One man is said to have distinguished himself above all the rest: Dieneces the Spartan. A speech which he made before the Greeks engaged the Medes, remains on record. One of the Trachinians told him, "Such was the number of the barbarians, that when they shot forth their arrows the sun would be darkened by their multitude." Dieneces, not at all frightened at these words, but making light of the Median numbers, answered "Our Trachinian friend brings us excellent tidings. If the Medes darken the sun, we shall have our fight in the shade."

AESCHYLUS

from *The Persians*

This tragedy, the oldest surviving play in theatrical literature, was first produced ca. 472 BCE. It was part of a trilogy by Aeschylus that won the Dionysia festival that year. The following are part of the choral introduction (ll. 65–139) and a late scene in which the ghost of Darius emerges from his tomb, sensing the state is in distress (ll. 787–844).

STROPHÊ A*

The King, destroyer of cities, long ago now
has driven his army against
the neighboring land on the opposite coast,
crossing the strait of Hella, Athamas' daughter,
by means of a floating bridge, bound by cords of flax,
a closely-bolted roadway,
casting a yoke about the sea's neck.†

ANTISTROPHÊ A

The raging lord of Asia with its many men
over every land drives
his god-like flock
in two ways, both by land and by sea,
trusting in his stalwart,
rugged commanders,
a man of golden birth, the equal of gods.

STROPHÊ B

With the dark look in his eyes
of a murderous snake,
armed with many companies of troops and many
ships,
swiftly driving his Assyrian chariot,
he leads against men famed for the spear
an Ares skilled in archery.

ANTISTROPHÊ B

No one is of such mettle as to withstand
this huge stream of men
or restrain with strong palisades
the irresistible swell of the sea:
the army of the Persians and its stout-hearted host
is not to be withstood.

* This lyric section opens in ionic, an exotic meter that suggests the atmosphere of the Persian court.

† The reference here and below is to the famous bridge with which Xerxes "yoked" the Hellespont (compare Herodotus 7.33ff.).

STROPHÊ C

Fate, by decree of the theos,
has held sway since olden times:
she has enjoined the Persians
to busy themselves with wars that destroy towers,
with tumultuous clashes of cavalry,
and with the overthrow of cities.

ANTISTROPHÊ C

They have learned to look upon
the sea's expanse
when it is whipped white
by the raging winds,
trusting in the fine-stranded cables
and the clever troop-conveying contrivances.

STROPHÊ D

But what man, being mortal, will avoid
the crafty deceit of the theos?
Who, though with nimble foot he be
†master of the lucky leap?†

ANTISTROPHÊ D

For Atê, fawning in friendly fashion at first,
entices a man into her nets,
whence it is impossible for a mortal,
leaping above, to escape.

STROPHÊ E*

Pondering these things my heart, draped in black,
is mangled with fear.
Alas for the Persian host!—may the city, the
great citadel of Susa, † not hear such a cry,
emptied of men.

ANTISTROPHÊ E

And the city of Kissa
will sing an antiphonal cry—
Alas!—the packed throng
of women calling out,
and rending will fall upon their fine linen robes.

STROPHÊ F

For the entire host,
both horse and foot,
like a swarm of bees has departed
with the army's leader,

having crossed the common headland
of the two continents,
now yoked together.

ANTISTROPHÊ F

But beds are filled with tears
in longing for husbands:
the Persian ladies, in womanish
longing for their dear lords—
each is left without a yoke-mate,
having sent off the impetuous warrior
who shares her bed.

* * *

CHORUS

What then are we to think, lord Darius? Whither will
you bend
the conclusion of your words? How might we, the
Persian host,
still fare well—as well as possible—given what has
happened?

GHOST OF DARIUS

By not marshalling a force against the land of the
Hellenes,
not even should a larger Persian force be raised.
For Mother Earth herself is their stout ally.

CHORUS

What did you mean by this? In what way does she aid
them?

GHOST OF DARIUS

By killing with famine forces that are excessive in
their numbers.

CHORUS

Then we will raise a choice force, well-equipped.

GHOST OF DARIUS

Yet not even that army which now has remained in
the land of Hellas
will return to find safety at home.

CHORUS

What did you say? Will the entire army of the
barbarians not
cross the passage of Hella, leaving Europe?

* There is a shift in meter here, from ionics to more troubled trochaics, that reinforces the shift in the chorus' mood.

† Capital of Persia.

GHOST OF DARIUS

Few indeed, out of many, will return—if, that is, it is
at all right
to trust the oracles of the theoi in considering the
events
just accomplished: for here is not a case of some being
true and others false.
If they are true, Xerxes leaves behind a hand-picked
mass of troops,
having put his confidence in idle hopes.
They remain where the Asopus waters the plains with
its
streams—a welcome source of fertility for the
Boeotian lands—
where it awaits them to suffer the most abominable of
evils
as payment for their hybris and their godless
thoughts.
For in coming to the land of Hellas they did not
shrink in reverence
from plundering the statues of the theoi or to burn
their temples.
The altars and the shrines of the daimones are no
more to be seen,
utterly overturned from their very foundations and
scattered in confusion.
As a result, having acted evilly, they suffer evils
as great or greater, while others are still to come, nor
yet has
the †foundation of their misfortunes been laid: it still
must be
capped off†—
such is the great libation of the blood of those
slaughtered that will be poured
on the land of the Plataeans by the Doric spear.
The mounds of corpses will bear silent testimony
to the eyes of mortals even to the third generation,
warning that, being mortal, one must not have
thoughts greater than
one's station.
For hybris, flowering to maturity, produces a blossom
of Atê*, whence one reaps a harvest laden with tears.
Looking upon the impost assessed for these deeds
remember Athens and Hellas, and let not anyone,
despising his present daimon
and lusting for others, pour out great olbos.
Zeus, I tell you, stands as a chastiser over thoughts
that are too haughty—a grievous corrector of men's
minds.
With these things in mind, admonish Xerxes ...
with sensible reproofs

to cease to offend the theoi with his haughty daring.
But you, dear aged mother of Xerxes,
go to the palace and, taking adornment that is seemly,
go to meet your son. For in his grief at his
misfortunes,
there hang in tatters about all his body
the shreds of his once splendid clothing.
In kindly fashion calm him with your words:
for—well I know—you alone will he endure to hear.
But I will go below, beneath the earth's gloom.
As for you, old men: farewell. And, though now amid
misfortunes,
continue to find pleasure for your hearts from day to
day,
for ploutos brings no comfort whatsoever to the dead.
[The Ghost of Darius descends back into his tomb.]

CHORUS

Indeed, I have felt anguish hearing of the many
sorrows
for the barbarians—both those that are upon us and
those yet to come.

* [Greek] goddess of folly.

Selected Poems

Sappho was born ca. 630–612 BCE. Her wealth allowed her leisure to study the arts on the isle of Lesbos, which was a cultural center in 7th century Hellas. She wrote her poems to be performed with the accompaniment of a lyre, innovating the music and meter.

I have not had one word from her*
 I have not had one word from her
 Frankly I wish I were dead
 When she left, she wept
 a great deal; she said to me, “This parting must be
 endured, Sappho. I go unwillingly.”
 I said, “Go, and be happy
 but remember (you know
 well) whom you leave shackled by love
 “If you forget me, think
 of our gifts to Aphrodite
 and all the loveliness that we shared
 “all the violet tiaras,
 braided rosebuds, dill and
 crocus twined around your young neck
 “myrrh poured on your head
 and on soft mats girls with
 all that they most wished for beside them
 “while no voices chanted
 choruses without ours,
 no woodlot bloomed in spring without song...”

To Andromeda†

That country girl has witched your wishes,
 all dressed up in her country clothes
 and she hasn't got the sense
 to hitch her rags above her ankles.

On the throne of many hues‡

On the throne of many hues, Immortal Aphrodite,
 child of Zeus, weaving wiles—I beg you
 not to subdue my spirit, Queen,
 with pain or sorrow
 but come—if ever before
 having heard my voice from far away
 you listened, and leaving your father's
 golden home you came

* Translated by Mary Barnard.

† Translated by Jim Powell.

‡ Translated by Diane Rayor.

in your chariot yoked with swift, lovely
 sparrows bringing you over the dark earth
 thick-feathered wings swirling down
 from the sky through mid-air
 arriving quickly—you, Blessed One,
 with a smile on your unaging face
 asking again what have I suffered
 and why am I calling again
 and in my wild heart what did I most wish
 to happen to me: “Again whom must I persuade
 back into the harness of your love?
 Sappho, who wrongs you?
 For if she flees, soon she'll pursue,
 she doesn't accept gifts, but she'll give,
 if not now loving, soon she'll love
 even against her will.”
 Come to me now again, release me from
 this pain, everything my spirit longs
 to have fulfilled, fulfill, and you
 be my ally

Please§

Come back to me, Gongyla, here tonight,
 You, my rose, with your Lydian lyre.
 There hovers forever around you delight:
 A beauty desired.
 Even your garment plunders my eyes.
 I am enchanted: I who once
 Complained to the Cyprus-born goddess,
 Whom I now beseech
 Never to let this lose me grace
 But rather bring you back to me:
 Amongst all mortal women the one
 I most wish to see.

Some an army of horsemen**

Some an army of horsemen, some an army on foot
 and some say a fleet of ships is the loveliest sight
 on this dark earth; but I say it is what-
 ever you desire:
 and it is possible to make this perfectly clear
 to all; for the woman who far surpassed all
 others
 in her beauty, Helen, left her husband—
 the best of all men—
 behind and sailed far away to Troy; she did not spare
 a single thought for her child nor for her dear
 parents
 but [the goddess of love] led her astray
 [to desire...]

§ Translated by Paul Roche.

** Translated by Josephine Balmer.

[...which]

reminds me now of Anactoria
although far away,

To me is seems*

To me it seems

that man has the fortune of the gods,
whoever sits beside you, and close,
who listens to you sweetly speaking
and laughing temptingly;
my heart flutters in my breast,
whenever I look quickly, for a moment—
I say nothing, my tongue broken,
a delicate fire runs under my skin,
my eyes see nothing, my ears roar,
cold sweat rushes down me,
trembling seizes me,
I am greener than grass,
to myself I seem
needing but little to die. But all must be
endured, since...

To Atthis†

Though in Sardis now,

she things of us constantly

and of the life we shared.

She saw you as a goddess

and above all your dancing gave her deep joy.

Now she shines among Lydian women like

the rose-fingered moon

rising after sundown, erasing all

stars around her, and pouring light equally

across the salt sea

and over densely flowered fields

lucent under dew. Her light spreads

on roses and tender thyme

and the blooming honey-lotus.

Often while she wanders she remem-

bers you, gentle Atthis,

and desire eats away at her heart

for us to come.

* Translation by Diane Rayor.

† Translated by Willis Barnstone.

PSEUDO-XENOPHON‡

On the Athenian Constitution§

The *Polity of the Athenians* was written c. 424 BCE by an unknown author. It is normally contrasted with Thucydides's celebration of the Athenian constitution as expressed in the Periclean Funeral Oration.

As for the constitution of the Athenians, their choice of this type of constitution I do not approve, for in choosing thus they choose that thieves should fare better than the elite. This then is why I do not approve. First of all, then, I shall say that at Athens the poor and the commons seem justly to have the advantage over the well-born and the wealthy; for it is the poor which mans the fleet and has brought the state her power, and the steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the shipwrights—these have brought the state her power much rather than the hoplites and the best-born and the elite.

This being so, it seems right that all should have a share in offices filled by lot or by election, and that any citizen who wishes should be allowed to speak. Then, in those offices which bring security to the whole people if they are in the hands of good citizens, but, if not, ruin, the poor desires to have no share. They do not think that they ought to have a share through the lot in the supreme commands or in the cavalry commands, for the poor realize that they reap greater benefit by not having these offices in their own hands, but by allowing men of standing to hold them. All those offices, however, whose end is pay and family benefits the poor do seek to hold.

Secondly, some people are surprised that everywhere they give the advantage to thieves, the poor, and the radical elements rather than to the elite. This is just where they will be seen to be preserving democracy. For if the poor and the common people and the worse elements are treated well, the growth of these classes will exalt the democracy; whereas if the rich and the elite are treated well the democrats strengthen their own opponents. In every land the elite are opposed to democracy. Among the elite there is very little license and injustice, very great

‡ Though compiled with Xenophon's *Polity of the Lacedaemonians* since Hellenistic times, the current treatise was proven in the 1930s not to have been written by Xenophon. The custom of modern classicists has been to flag longstanding, but wrong, attributions with the prefix "pseudo"; thus Pseudo-Xenophon. The author is also often referred to as "The Old Oligarch."

§ From: Fred Fling, ed., *A Source Book of Greek History*, (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1907), pp. 155-159. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

discrimination as to what is worthy, while among the poor there is very great ignorance, disorderliness, and thievery; for poverty tends to lead them to what is disgraceful as does lack of education and the ignorance which befall some men as a result of poverty.

It may be said that they ought not to have allowed everyone in turn to make speeches or sit on the Council, but only those of the highest capability and quality. As it is, anyone who wants, a thief maybe, gets up and makes a speech, and devises what is to the advantage of himself and those like him. From such procedure then a city would not attain the ideal, but the democracy would be best preserved. For it is the wish of the poor not that the state should be well-ordered and the poor themselves in complete subjection, but that the poor should have their freedom and be in control; disorderliness is of little consequence to it. From what you consider lack of order come the strength and the liberty of the commons itself. If, on the other hand, you investigate good order, first of all you will see that the most capable make laws for others; then the the elite will keep the thieves in check and will deliberate on matters of state, refusing to allow madmen to sit on the Council or make speeches or attend the general assemblies. Such advantages would indeed very soon throw the poor into complete subjection.

The license allowed to slaves and foreigners at Athens is extreme, and a blow to them is forbidden there, nor will a slave make way for you! I shall tell you why this is the custom of the country. If it were legal for a slave or a foreigner or a freedman to be beaten by a free man, you would often have taken the Athenian for a slave, and struck him, for the poor there do not dress better than the slaves and the foreigners! If anyone is surprised also at their allowing slaves—at least some of them—to live luxuriously and magnificently there, here too they would be seen to act with wisdom. In a naval state slaves must serve for hire, that we may receive the fee for their labor, and we must let them go free. Where there are rich slaves it is no longer profitable that my slave should be afraid of you. In Sparta my slave is afraid of you. If your slave is afraid of me there will be a danger even of his giving his own money to avoid personal risks. This then is why we placed even slaves on a footing of equality with free men; and we placed foreigners on a footing of equality with citizens because the state has need of foreigners, owing to the number of skilled trades and because of the fleet.

As for the states allied to Athens, the Athenians enforce democracy in these states because they know that if the rich and the elite have control the rule of the poor back at Athens will be short-lived. This then

is why they disenfranchise the the elite, rob them of their wealth, drive them into exile, or put them to death, while they exalt the thieves. The poor of Athens protect the poor in the allied cities, realizing that it is to their own advantage always to protect the elite elements in the various cities....Of such mainland states as are subject to Athenian rule the large are in subjection because of fear, the small simply because of need; there is not a city which does not require both import and export trade, and it will not have that unless it is subject to Athens—the rulers of the seas....The Athenians alone possess the wealth of the Hellenes and the foreigners. If a city is rich in shipbuilding timber, where will it dispose of it unless it win the consent of the Athenians? What if some city is rich in iron or bronze or cloth? Where will it dispose of it unless it win the consent of the rulers of the seas?

Again, oligarchical states must abide by their alliances and their oaths. If they do not keep to the agreement, penalties can be exacted from the few who made it. But whenever the poor of Athens make an agreement they can lay the blame on the individual speaker or the proposer, and say to the other party that it was not present and does not approve what they know was agreed upon in full assembly; and should it be decided that this is not so, the poor have discovered a hundred excuses for not doing what they do not wish to do. If anything bad result from a decision of the Assembly, they lay the blame on a minority for opposing and working its ruin, whereas if any good comes about they take the credit to themselves. They do not allow caricature and abuse of the commons, lest they should hear themselves the butt of endless jokes, but they do allow you to caricature any person you wish to. They well know that generally the man who is caricatured is not of the poor or of the crowd, but someone rich or well-born or influential, and that few of the poor and democrats are caricatured, and they only because they are busy-bodies and try to overreach the commons; so they are not angry when such men are caricatured either.

I say, then, that the poor at Athens realize which citizens are good and which are thieves. With this knowledge, they favor those who are friendly and useful to them, even if they are thieves, whereas they hate rather the elite. This type of constitution of the Athenians I do not approve, but as they saw fit to be a democracy, in my opinion they preserve their democracy well by employing the means I have pointed out.

EURIPIDES

from *Medea*

Medea was first produced in 431 BCE. Medea is an outsider in Corinth whose betrayal by her husband (the famous Jason, who's left Medea to marry the Corinthian princess)—and her fury in response—jeopardize her acceptance by the Greeks. This scene takes place after Medea has sent her children bearing a poisoned robe and crown to the princess, supposedly as a gift to elicit mercy toward her children.

[Enter the Tutor with the children]

TUTOR

My lady, your children won't be exiled.
The royal bride was happy to accept,
with own hands, the gifts you sent her.
Now the boys have made their peace with her.

[Medea starts to weep]

What's wrong? Why do you stand there in distress?
Things have worked out well. Why turn away again?
Aren't you happy to hear my splendid news?

MEDEA

Alas . . .

TUTOR

An odd response to the news I bring.

MEDEA

All I can say is I'm so sad . . .

TUTOR

Have I mistakenly said something bad?
Am I wrong to think my news is good?

MEDEA

You've reported what you had to tell me.
I'm not blaming you.

TUTOR

Then why avert your eyes?
Why are you crying?

MEDEA

Old man, I have my reasons.
The gods and I, with my worst intentions,
have brought about this situation.

TUTOR

Be happy. Your children will one day
bring you back home again.

MEDEA

But before that,
I shall bring others to their homes—alas,
how miserable I feel.

TUTOR

You're not the only mother whose children
have been separated from her. We mortals
must bear our bad times patiently.

MEDEA

I'll do so.

But now go in the house. And carry on.
Give the children their usual routine.
[Tutor exits into the house. The children remain]

Oh children, my children, you still have
a city and a home, where you can live,
once you've left me in wretched suffering.
You can live on here without your mother.
But I'll go to some other country,
an exile, before I've had my joy in you,
before I've seen you happy, or helped
to decorate your marriage beds, your brides,
your bridal chambers, or lifted high
your wedding torches. How miserable
my self-will has made me. I raised you—
and all for nothing. The work I did for you,
the cruel hardships, pains of childbirth—
all for nothing. Once, in my foolishness,
I had many hopes in you—it's true—
that you'd look after me in my old age,
that you'd prepare my corpse with your own hands,
in the proper way, as all people wish.
But now my tender dreams have been destroyed.
For I'll live my life without you both,
in sorrow. And those loving eyes of yours
will never see your mother any more.
Your life is changing. Oh, my children,
why are you looking at me in that way?
Why smile at me—that last smile of yours?
Alas, what shall I do? You women here,
my heart gives way when I see those eyes,
my children's smiling eyes. I cannot do it.
Good bye to those previous plans of mine.
I'll take my children from this country.
Why harm them as a way to hurt their father
and have to suffer twice his pain myself?
No, I won't do that. And so farewell

to what I planned before. But what's going on?
What's wrong with me? Do I really want
my enemies escaping punishment,
while I become someone they ridicule?
I will go through with this. What a coward
I am even to let my heart admit
such sentimental reasons. Children,
you must go into the house.

*[The children move toward the house but remain at the
door, looking at Medea]*

Anyone forbidden
to attend my sacrifice, let such a man
concern himself about these children.
My hand will never lack the strength for this.
And yet . . . My heart, don't do this murder.
You're made of stone, but leave the boys alone.
Spare my children. If they remain alive,
with me in Athens, they'll make you happy.
No! By those avengers in lower Hell,
I'll never deliver up my children,
hand them over to their enemies,
to be humiliated. They must die—
that's unavoidable, no matter what.
Since that must happen, then their mother,
the one who gave them life, will kill them.
At all events it's settled. There's no way out.
On her head the royal bride already wears
the poisoned crown. That dress is killing her.
But I'm treading an agonizing path,
and send my children on one even worse.
What I want to do now is say farewell.

*[Medea moves to the children near the door, kneels
down and hugs them]*

Give me your right hands, children. Come on.
Let your mother kiss them. Oh, these hands—
how I love them—and how I love these mouths,
faces—the bearing of such noble boys.
I wish you happiness—but somewhere else.
Where you live now your father takes away.
Oh this soft embrace! Their skin's so tender.
My boys' breathing smells so sweet to me.
But you must go inside. Go. I can't stand
to look at you any more like this.
The evil done to me has won the day.
I understand too well the dreadful act
I'm going to commit, but my judgment
can't check my anger, and that incites
the greatest evils human beings do.

VARIOUS

Documents on Greek Slavery*

Hesiod: Works and Days, c. 750 BCE

First of all, get a house, and a woman and an ox for
the plough—a slave woman and not a wife, to follow
the oxen as well—and make everything ready at
home, so that you may not have to ask of another, and
he refuse you, and so, because you are in lack, the
season pass by and your work come to nothing.

Strabo: Geographia, [written c. 20 A.D.], writing about 550 BCE

And the temple of Aphrodite [at Corinth] was so
rich that it owned more than a thousand temple
slaves—prostitutes—whom both free men and women
had dedicated to the goddess. And therefore it was
also on account of these temple-prostitutes that the
city was crowded with people and grew rich; for
instance, the ship captains freely squandered their
money, and hence the proverb, "Not for every man is
the voyage to Corinth."

Antiphon: On the Choreutes, c. 430 BCE

So powerful is the compulsion of the law, that even
if a man slays one who is his own chattel [i.e., his
slave] and who has none to avenge him, his fear of the
ordinances of god and of man causes him to purify
himself and withhold himself from those places
prescribed by law, in the hope that by so doing he will
best avoid disaster.

Demosthenes: Against Timocrates. c. 350 BCE

If, gentlemen of the jury, you will turn over in your
minds the question what is the difference between
being a slave and being a free man, you will find that
the biggest difference is that the body of a slave is
made responsible for all his misdeeds, whereas
corporal punishment is the last penalty to inflict on a
free man.

* Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, Benjamin Jowett, trans.,
(New York: Colonial Press, 1900), pp. 4-9; Fred Morrow Fling,
ed., *A Source Book of Greek History*, (Boston: D. C. Heath,
1907), pp. 23-26, 29-30. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of
History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized
the text.

Aristotle: The Politics, on slavery, c. 330 BCE

Let us first speak of master and slave, looking to the needs of practical life and also seeking to attain some better theory of their relation than exists at present....Property is a part of the household, and the art of acquiring property is a part of the art of managing the household; for no man can live well, or indeed live at all, unless he be provided with necessaries. And so, in the arrangement of the family, a slave is a living possession, and property a number of such instruments; and the slave is himself an instrument which takes precedence of all other instruments.....The master is only the master of the slave; he does not belong to him, whereas the slave is not only the slave of his master, but wholly belongs to him. Hence we see what is the nature and office of a slave; he who is by nature not his own but another's man, is by nature a slave; and he may be said to be another's man who, being a human being, is also a possession. And a possession may be defined as an instrument of action, separable from the possessor.

But is there any one thus intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature? There is no difficulty in answering this question, on grounds both of reason and of fact. For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule....Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind.

Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another's and he who participates in rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have, such a principle, is a slave by nature. Whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend a principle; they obey their instincts. And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life. Nature would like to distinguish between the bodies of freemen and slaves, making the one strong for servile labor, the other upright, and although useless for such services, useful for political life in the arts both of war and peace. But the opposite often happens—that some have the souls and others have the bodies of free men. And doubtless if men differed from one another in the mere forms of their bodies as much as the statues of

the gods do from men, all would acknowledge that the inferior class should be slaves of the superior. It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.

There is a slave or slavery by law as well as by nature. The law of which I speak is a sort of convention—the law by which whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors. But this right many jurists impeach, as they would an orator who brought forward an unconstitutional measure: they detest the notion that, because one man has the power of doing violence and is superior in brute strength, another shall be his slave and subject. Even among philosophers there is a difference of opinion. The origin of the dispute, and what makes the views invade each other's territory, is as follows: in some sense virtue, when furnished with means, has actually the greatest power of exercising force; and as superior power is only found where there is superior excellence of some kind, power seems to imply virtue, and the dispute to be simply one about justice (for it is due to one party identifying justice with goodwill while the other identifies it with the mere rule of the stronger). If these views are thus set out separately, the other views have no force or plausibility against the view that the superior in virtue ought to rule, or be master.

Others, clinging, as they think, simply to a principle of justice (for law and custom are a sort of justice), assume that slavery in accordance with the custom of war is justified by law, but at the same moment they deny this. For what if the cause of the war be unjust? And again, no one would ever say he is a slave who is unworthy to be a slave. Were this the case, men of the highest rank would be slaves and the children of slaves if they or their parents chance to have been taken captive and sold. Wherefore Hellenes do not like to call Hellenes slaves, but confine the term to barbarians. Yet, in using this language, they really mean the natural slave of whom we spoke at first; for it must be admitted that some are slaves everywhere, others nowhere. The same principle applies to nobility. Hellenes regard themselves as noble everywhere, and not only in their own country, but they deem the barbarians noble only when at home, thereby implying that there are two sorts of nobility and freedom, the one absolute, the other relative.

Accounts of the Hellenic Games*

Pindar: Olympian Odes, c. 470 BCE

No. 9) Fit speech may I find for my journey in the Muses' car; and let me therewith have daring and powers of ample scope. To back the prowess of a friend I came, when Lampromachos won his Isthmian crown, when on the same day both he and his brother overcame. And afterwards at the gates of Corinth two triumphs again befell Epharmostos and more in the valleys of Nemea. At Argos he triumphed over men, as over boys at Athens. And I might tell how at Marathon he stole from among the beardless and confronted the full-grown for the prize of silver vessels, how without a fall he threw his men with swift and coming shock, and how loud the shouting pealed when round the ring he ran, in the beauty of his youth and fair form and fresh from fairest deeds.

No. 10) Ample is the glory stored for Olympian winners; thereof my shepherd tongue is fain to keep some part in fold. But only by the help of Zeus is wisdom kept ever blooming in the soul. Son of Arcestratos, Agesidamos, know certainly that for your boxing I will lay a glory of sweet strains upon your crown of golden olive and will have in remembrance the race of the Locrians in the west.

No. 11) Who then won to their lot the new-appointed crown by hands or feet or chariot, setting before them the prize of glory in the games, and winning it by their act? In the foot-race down the straight course of the stadion was Likymnios' son Oionos first, from Nodea had he led his host: in the wrestling was Tegea glorified by Echemos: Doryklos won the prize of boxing, a dweller in the city of Tiryns, and with the four-horse chariot, Samos of Mantinea, Halirrhotos' son: with the javelin Phrastor hit the mark: in distance Enikeus beyond all others hurled the stone with a circling sweep, and all the warrior company thundered a great applause. Then on the evening the lovely shining of the fair-faced moon beamed forth, and all the precinct sounded with songs of festal glee, after the manner which is to this day for triumph.

No. 13) Also two parsley-wreaths shadowed his head before the people at the games of Isthmus, nor

* From: Fred Morrow Fling, ed., *A Source Book of Greek History*, (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1907), pp. 47-53. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

does Nemea tell a different tale. And of his father Thessalos' lightning feet is recorded by the streams of Alpheos, and at Pytho he has renown for the single and for the double stadion gained both in a single day, and in the same month at rocky Pan-Athenaios a day of swiftness crowned his hair for three illustrious deeds, and the Hellotia seven times, and at the games of Poseidon between seas longer hymns followed his father Ptoiodoros with Terpsias and Eritimos. And how often you were first at Delphi or in the Pastures of the Lion, though with full many do I match your crowd of honors, yet can I no more surely tell than the tale of pebbles on the sea-shore.

Thucydides: The History of the Peloponnesian War, c. 404 BCE

The Lacedaemonians were the first who in their athletic exercises stripped naked and rubbed themselves over with oil. But this was not the ancient custom; athletes formerly, even when they were contending at Olympia, wore loin-cloths, a practice which lasted until quite lately, and still prevails among Barbarians, especially those of Asia, where the combatants at boxing and wrestling matches wear loin-cloths.

It was at this time, after the purification, that the Athenians first celebrated the quinquennial festival of the Delian games. There had been, however, even in very early times, a great assembly of the Ionians and the neighboring islanders held at Delos; for they used to come to the feast with their wives and children, as the Ionians now do to the Ephesian festivals, and gymnastic and musical contests were held, and the different cities took up bands of dancers.

Xenophon: Hellenica, c. 370 BCE

If one should win a victory thanks to the swiftness of his feet or when competing in the pentathlon there in the sanctuary of Zeus by the streams of Pisa at Olympia, or if one should gain the prize in wrestling or painful boxing, or in that fearful contest people call all-in-fighting, to his fellow citizens he would be thought more glorious to look on than ever, and he would gain from his polis the right to meals at public expense and a gift which would be his personal treasure. And if his victory were won with horses, he would also gain all these things, even though he is not as worthy as I. For our wisdom is better than the strength of men or horses. For even if there were a good boxer among the citizens or one skilled in the pentathlon or wrestling, or, indeed, even if there were a great sprinter, which holds the front rank among the athletic achievements of men, the polis would still not

be better governed because of this. A polis would gain little joy if someone should win in competition by the banks of the Pisa, for that victory would not fill its storehouses.

Strabo: Geographia, c. 20 CE

There was anciently a contest held at Delphi, of players on the cithara, who executed a paean in honor of the god. It was instituted by the Delphians. But after the Crisaeian war the amphictyons, in the time of Eurylochus, established contests for horses and gymnastic sports, in which the victor was crowned. These were called Pythian games, in addition to the musical contests.

Pausanias: Description of Greece, c. 175 CE

From the time the Olympian games were revived continuously, prizes were first instituted for running, and Coroebus of Elis was the victor....And in the 14th Olympiad afterwards the double course was introduced, when Hypenus, a native of Pisa, won the wild olive crown, and Acanthus the second. And in the 18th Olympiad they introduced the pentathlon and wrestling....And in the 23rd Olympiad they ordained prizes for boxing...And in the 25th Olympiad they had a race of full-grown horses....And in the 28th Olympiad they introduced the pancratium and the riding race. The horse of Crannonian Crauxidas got in first, and the competitors for the pancratium were beaten by the Syracusan Lygdamus, who has his sepulcher at the stone quarries of Syracuse....And the contest of the boys was not a revival of ancient usage, but the people of Elis instituted it because the idea pleased them. So prizes were instituted for running and wrestling among boys in the 37th Olympiad. And in the 41st Olympiad afterwards they invited boxing boys....And the race in heavy armor was tried in the 65th Olympiad as an exercise for war, I think....The order of the games in our day is to sacrifice victims to the god and then to contend in the pentathlon and horse-race, according to the program established in the 77th Olympiad, for before this horses and men contended on the same day. And at that period the pancrataists did not appear till night, for they could not compete sooner, so much time being taken up by the horse-races and pentathlon....A crown of wild olive was given to the victor at Olympia, and laurel at Delphi. And at the Isthmian Games pine leaves, at the Nemean Games parsley, as we know from the cases of Palaemon and Archemorus. But most games have a crown of palm as the prize, and everywhere the palm is put into the right hand of the victor.

As you go from Scillus along the road to Olympia, before you cross the Alpheius, there is a mountain with high, precipitous cliffs. It is called Mount Typaeum. It is a law of Elis to cast down it any women who are caught present at the Olympic games, or even on the other side of the Alpheius, on the days prohibited to women. However, they say that no woman has been caught, except Callipateira only....She, being a widow, disguised herself exactly like a gymnastic trainer, and brought her son to compete at Olympia. Peisirodus, for so her son was called, was victorious, and Callipateira, as she was jumping over the enclosure in which they keep the trainers shut up, bared her person. So her sex was discovered, but they let her go unpunished out of respect for her father, her brothers and her son, all of whom had been victorious at Olympia. But a law was passed that for the future trainers should strip before entering the arena.

Every fourth year there is woven for Hera a robe by the Sixteen Women [at Elis], and the same also hold games called Heraea. The games consist of foot-races for maidens. These are not all of the same age. The first to run are the youngest; after them come the next in age, and the last to run are the oldest of the maidens. They run in the following way: their hair hangs down, a tunic reaches to a little above the knee, and they bare the right shoulder as far as the breast. These too have the Olympic stadium reserved for their games, but the course of the stadium is shortened for them by about one-sixth of its length. To the winning maidens they give crowns of olive and a portion of the cow sacrificed to Hera. They may also dedicate statues with their names inscribed upon them. The games of the maidens too are traced back to ancient times; they say that, out of gratitude to Hera for her marriage with Pelops, Hippodameia assembled the Sixteen Women, and with them inaugurated the Heraea. The Sixteen Women also arrange two choral dances, one called that of Physcoa and the other that of Hippodameia.

Milo of Croton won six victories for wrestling at Olympia, one of them among the boys; at the Pythian he won six among the men and one among the boys. He came to Olympia to wrestle for the seventh time, but did not succeed in mastering Timasitheus, a fellow-citizen who was also a young man, and who refused, moreover, to come to close quarters with him. It is further stated that Milo carried his own statue into the Altis. His feats with the pomegranate and the quoit are also remembered by tradition. He would grasp a pomegranate so firmly that nobody could wrest it from him by force, and yet he did not damage it by pressure. He would stand upon a greased quoit, and make fools of those who charged

him and tried to push him from the quoit. He used to perform also the following exhibition feats. He would tie a cord round his forehead as though it were a ribbon or a crown. Holding his breath and filling with blood the veins on his head, he would break the cord by the strength of these veins. It is said that he would let down by his side his right arm from the shoulder to the elbow, and stretch out straight the arm below the elbow, turning the thumb upwards, while the other fingers lay in a row. In this position, then, the little finger was lowest, but nobody could bend it back by pressure.

THUCYDIDES

Perikles's Funeral Oration*

This famous speech was given by the Athenian leader Pericles after the first battles of the Peloponnesian war. Funerals after such battles were public rituals and Pericles used the occasion to make a classic statement of the value of democracy.

In the same winter the Athenians gave a funeral at the public cost to those who had first fallen in this war ... and Pericles, son of Xanthippus, was chosen to pronounce their eulogium. When the proper time arrived, he advanced from the sepulchre to an elevated platform in order to be heard by as many of the crowd as possible, and spoke as follows:

“Most of my predecessors in this place have commended him who made this speech part of the law, telling us that it is well that it should be delivered at the burial of those who fall in battle. For myself, I should have thought that the worth which had displayed itself in deeds would be sufficiently rewarded by honours also shown by deeds; such as you now see in this funeral prepared at the people's cost. And I could have wished that the reputations of many brave men were not to be imperilled in the mouth of a single individual, to stand or fall according as he spoke well or ill. For it is hard to speak properly upon a subject where it is even difficult to convince your hearers that you are speaking the truth. On the one hand, the friend who is familiar with every fact of the story may think that some point has not been set forth with that fullness which he wishes and knows it to deserve; on the other, he who is a stranger to the matter may be led by envy to suspect exaggeration if he hears anything above his own nature. For men can endure to hear others praised only so long as they can

severally persuade themselves of their own ability to equal the actions recounted: when this point is passed, envy comes in and with it incredulity. However, since our ancestors have stamped this custom with their approval, it becomes my duty to obey the law and to try to satisfy your several wishes and opinions as best I may.

“I shall begin with our ancestors: it is both just and proper that they should have the honour of the first mention on an occasion like the present. They dwelt in the country without break in the succession from generation to generation, and handed it down free to the present time by their valour. And if our more remote ancestors deserve praise, much more do our own fathers, who added to their inheritance the empire which we now possess, and spared no pains to be able to leave their acquisitions to us of the present generation. Lastly, there are few parts of our dominions that have not been augmented by those of us here, who are still more or less in the vigour of life; while the mother country has been furnished by us with everything that can enable her to depend on her own resources whether for war or for peace. That part of our history which tells of the military achievements which gave us our several possessions, or of the ready valour with which either we or our fathers stemmed the tide of Hellenic or foreign aggression, is a theme too familiar to my hearers for me to dilate on, and I shall therefore pass it by. But what was the road by which we reached our position, what the form of government under which our greatness grew, what the national habits out of which it sprang; these are questions which I may try to solve before I proceed to my panegyric upon these men; since I think this to be a subject upon which on the present occasion a speaker may properly dwell, and to which the whole assemblage, whether citizens or foreigners, may listen with advantage.

“Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be

* Thucydides (c.460/455-c.399 BCE): Peloponnesian War, Book 2.34-46. Translated by Richard Crawley, 1874.

offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace.

“Further, we provide plenty of means for the mind to refresh itself from business. We celebrate games and sacrifices all the year round, and the elegance of our private establishments forms a daily source of pleasure and helps to banish the spleen; while the magnitude of our city draws the produce of the world into our harbour, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own.

“If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ from our antagonists. We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing, although the eyes of an enemy may occasionally profit by our liberality; trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of our citizens; while in education, where our rivals from their very cradles by a painful discipline seek after manliness, at Athens we live exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to encounter every legitimate danger. In proof of this it may be noticed that the Lacedaemonians do not invade our country alone, but bring with them all their confederates; while we Athenians advance unsupported into the territory of a neighbour, and fighting upon a foreign soil usually vanquish with ease men who are defending their homes. Our united force was never yet encountered by any enemy, because we have at once to attend to our marine and to dispatch our citizens by land upon a hundred different services; so that, wherever they engage with some such fraction of our strength, a success against a detachment is magnified into a victory over the nation, and a defeat into a reverse suffered at the hands of our entire people. And yet if with habits not of labour but of ease, and courage not of art but of nature, we are still willing to encounter danger, we have the double advantage of escaping the experience of hardships in anticipation and of facing them in the hour of need as fearlessly as those who are never free from them.

“Nor are these the only points in which our city is worthy of admiration. We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle

against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and, instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all. Again, in our enterprises we present the singular spectacle of daring and deliberation, each carried to its highest point, and both united in the same persons; although usually decision is the fruit of ignorance, hesitation of reflection. But the palm of courage will surely be adjudged most justly to those, who best know the difference between hardship and pleasure and yet are never tempted to shrink from danger. In generosity we are equally singular, acquiring our friends by conferring, not by receiving, favours. Yet, of course, the doer of the favour is the firmer friend of the two, in order by continued kindness to keep the recipient in his debt; while the debtor feels less keenly from the very consciousness that the return he makes will be a payment, not a free gift. And it is only the Athenians, who, fearless of consequences, confer their benefits not from calculations of expediency, but in the confidence of liberality.

“In short, I say that as a city we are the school of Hellas, while I doubt if the world can produce a man who, where he has only himself to depend upon, is equal to so many emergencies, and graced by so happy a versatility, as the Athenian. And that this is no mere boast thrown out for the occasion, but plain matter of fact, the power of the state acquired by these habits proves. For Athens alone of her contemporaries is found when tested to be greater than her reputation, and alone gives no occasion to her assailants to blush at the antagonist by whom they have been worsted, or to her subjects to question her title by merit to rule. Rather, the admiration of the present and succeeding ages will be ours, since we have not left our power without witness, but have shown it by mighty proofs; and far from needing a Homer for our panegyrist, or other of his craft whose verses might charm for the moment only for the impression which they gave to melt at the touch of fact, we have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere, whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us. Such is the Athens for which these men, in the assertion of their resolve not to lose her, nobly fought and died; and well may every one of their survivors be ready to suffer in her cause.

“Indeed if I have dwelt at some length upon the character of our country, it has been to show that our

stake in the struggle is not the same as theirs who have no such blessings to lose, and also that the panegyric of the men over whom I am now speaking might be by definite proofs established. That panegyric is now in a great measure complete; for the Athens that I have celebrated is only what the heroism of these and their like have made her, men whose fame, unlike that of most Hellenes, will be found to be only commensurate with their deserts. And if a test of worth be wanted, it is to be found in their closing scene, and this not only in cases in which it set the final seal upon their merit, but also in those in which it gave the first intimation of their having any. For there is justice in the claim that steadfastness in his country's battles should be as a cloak to cover a man's other imperfections; since the good action has blotted out the bad, and his merit as a citizen more than outweighed his demerits as an individual. But none of these allowed either wealth with its prospect of future enjoyment to unnerve his spirit, or poverty with its hope of a day of freedom and riches to tempt him to shrink from danger. No, holding that vengeance upon their enemies was more to be desired than any personal blessings, and reckoning this to be the most glorious of hazards, they joyfully determined to accept the risk, to make sure of their vengeance, and to let their wishes wait; and while committing to hope the uncertainty of final success, in the business before them they thought fit to act boldly and trust in themselves. Thus choosing to die resisting, rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonour, but met danger face to face, and after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, escaped, not from their fear, but from their glory.

“So died these men as became Athenians. You, their survivors, must determine to have as unflinching a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a happier issue. And not contented with ideas derived only from words of the advantages which are bound up with the defence of your country, though these would furnish a valuable text to a speaker even before an audience so alive to them as the present, you must yourselves realize the power of Athens, and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; and then, when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and a keen feeling of honour in action that men were enabled to win all this, and that no personal failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valour, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution that they could offer. For this offering of their lives made in common by them all they each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulchre, not so much that in which their bones have been deposited,

but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall call for its commemoration. For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb; and in lands far from their own, where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten with no tablet to preserve it, except that of the heart. These take as your model and, judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valour, never decline the dangers of war. For it is not the miserable that would most justly be unsparing of their lives; these have nothing to hope for: it is rather they to whom continued life may bring reverses as yet unknown, and to whom a fall, if it came, would be most tremendous in its consequences. And surely, to a man of spirit, the degradation of cowardice must be immeasurably more grievous than the unfelt death which strikes him in the midst of his strength and patriotism!

“Comfort, therefore, not condolence, is what I have to offer to the parents of the dead who may be here. Numberless are the chances to which, as they know, the life of man is subject; but fortunate indeed are they who draw for their lot a death so glorious as that which has caused your mourning, and to whom life has been so exactly measured as to terminate in the happiness in which it has been passed. Still I know that this is a hard saying, especially when those are in question of whom you will constantly be reminded by seeing in the homes of others blessings of which once you also boasted: for grief is felt not so much for the want of what we have never known, as for the loss of that to which we have been long accustomed. Yet you who are still of an age to beget children must bear up in the hope of having others in their stead; not only will they help you to forget those whom you have lost, but will be to the state at once a reinforcement and a security; for never can a fair or just policy be expected of the citizen who does not, like his fellows, bring to the decision the interests and apprehensions of a father. While those of you who have passed your prime must congratulate yourselves with the thought that the best part of your life was fortunate, and that the brief span that remains will be cheered by the fame of the departed. For it is only the love of honour that never grows old; and honour it is, not gain, as some would have it, that rejoices the heart of age and helplessness.

“Turning to the sons or brothers of the dead, I see an arduous struggle before you. When a man is gone, all are wont to praise him, and should your merit be ever so transcendent, you will still find it difficult not merely to overtake, but even to approach their renown. The living have envy to contend with, while

those who are no longer in our path are honoured with a goodwill into which rivalry does not enter. On the other hand, if I must say anything on the subject of female excellence to those of you who will now be in widowhood, it will be all comprised in this brief exhortation. Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character; and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among the men, whether for good or for bad.

“My task is now finished. I have performed it to the best of my ability, and in word, at least, the requirements of the law are now satisfied. If deeds be in question, those who are here interred have received part of their honours already, and for the rest, their children will be brought up till manhood at the public expense: the state thus offers a valuable prize, as the garland of victory in this race of valour, for the reward both of those who have fallen and their survivors. And where the rewards for merit are greatest, there are found the best citizens.

“And now that you have brought to a close your lamentations for your relatives, you may depart.”

THUCYDIDES

Civil War in Corcyra*

Thucydides has just described a violent civil war (stasis) on the island of Corcyra fought in the year 427 between two opposite political factions, one favoring an extreme form of democracy and supported by the Athenians, the other advocating a more conservative, oligarchic form of government and supported by Sparta. For Thucydides the demoralizing events of Corcyra are an ominous indication of what was to occur throughout the Greek world in the latter years of the war.

(82) So savage was the factional strife that broke out—and it seemed all the worse in that it was the first to occur. Later on, indeed, all of Hellas (so to speak) was thrown into turmoil, there being discord everywhere, with the representatives of the demos (i.e. the extreme democratic factions) wanting to bring in the Athenians to support their cause, while the oligarchic factions looked to the Spartans. In peacetime they would have had no excuse nor would they have been prepared to summon them for help, but in the midst of a war, the summoning of outside aid readily offered those on both sides who desired a change in the status quo alliances that promised harm for their opponents and, at the same time, benefit for themselves.

Many harsh events befell the various cities due to the ensuing factional strife—things which always occur in such times and always will occur, so long as human nature (physis) remains the same, although with varying degrees of violence, perhaps, and differing in form, according as variations in circumstances should arise. For in peacetime, and amid prosperous circumstances, both cities and individuals possess more noble dispositions, because they have not fallen into the overpowering constraints imposed by harsher times. But war, which destroys the easy routines of people’s daily lives, is a violent schoolmaster, and assimilates the dispositions of most people to the prevailing circumstances.

So then, affairs in the cities were being torn apart by faction, and those struggles that occurred in the latter stages of the war—through news, I suppose, of what had occurred earlier in other cities—pushed to greater lengths the extravagance with which new plots were devised, both in the inventiveness of the various attempts at revolt and in the unheard-of nature of the subsequent acts of retaliation.

And people altered, at their pleasure, the customary significance of words to suit their deeds: irrational daring came to be considered the “manly courage of one loyal to his party”; prudent delay was thought a fair-seeming cowardice; a moderate attitude was deemed a mere shield for lack of virility, and a reasoned understanding with regard to all sides of an issue meant that one was indolent and of no use for anything. Rash enthusiasm for one’s cause was deemed the part of a true man; to attempt to employ reason in plotting a safe course of action, a specious excuse for desertion.

One who displayed violent anger was “eternally faithful,” whereas any who spoke against such a person was viewed with suspicion. One who laid a scheme and was successful was “wise,” while anyone who suspected and ferreted out such a plot beforehand was considered still cleverer. Any who planned beforehand in order that no such measures should be necessary was a “subverter of the party” and was accused of being intimidated by the opposition. In general, the one who beat another at performing some act of villainy beforehand was praised, as was one who urged another on to such a deed which the latter, originally, had no intention of performing.

Indeed, even kinship came to represent a less intimate bond than that of party faction, since the latter implied a greater willingness to engage in violent acts of daring without demur. For such unions were formed, not with a view to profiting from the established laws, but with a view toward political advantage contrary to such laws. And their mutual

* Translated by John Porter.

oaths they cemented, not by means of religious sanction, but by sharing in some common crime.

Fair proposals offered by the opposing faction were accepted by the party enjoying the superior position in a guarded fashion, not in a truly generous spirit. More concern was placed on exacting vengeance from someone else than on not suffering a wrong yourself in the first place. And if ever oaths of reconciliation did come about, having been exchanged in the face of some temporary difficulty, they remained in force only so long as the parties possessed no resources from any other source. The one who was quicker to seize the opportunity for some daring outrage, if ever he saw his opponent off his guard, took more pleasure in taking vengeance in this way than if he had done so openly, considering this method to be safer and thinking that, by getting the upper hand through deceit, he had won in addition the prize for cleverness. And indeed, most people accept more readily being called clever, when they are knaves, than being called fools when they are honest: the latter they take shame in, whereas they preen themselves on the former.

The cause of all of these things was the pursuit of political power, motivated by greed and ambition. And out of these factors arose the fanatical enthusiasm of individuals now fully disposed to pursue political vendettas. For the leading men on both sides in each city, employing fine-sounding phrases and advocating either equality before the law for the masses (in the case of the democrats) or the moderate rule of the best men (in the case of the oligarchs) made a show of serving the common good but in fact engaged in competition for personal advancement. Competing in every possible fashion to get the better of their opponents, they went to the farthest extremes of daring and executed even greater acts of vengeance, not limiting themselves by the demands of justice or the interests of the city, but only by their whims at any particular moment. In their efforts to gain power either through the use of trumped up lawsuits or by force, they were always ready to pursue the political vendetta of the moment. The result was that neither side was wont to pay any regard to personal integrity: those who succeeded in accomplishing some act of malice under cover of some fine phrase were the ones to gain general approval. By contrast, those citizens who chose the middle course of moderation perished at the hands of both factions, either for their failure to join in the struggle or due to envy at the fact that they were surviving amid the general chaos.

(83) Thus moral degeneration of every type took hold throughout Hellas due to factional strife, and simplicity of character—with which a concern for

honor is intimately connected—became an object of mockery and disappeared. People were ranged against one another in opposite ideological camps, with the result that distrust and suspicion became rampant.

For there was no means that could hope to bring an end to the strife—no speech that could be trusted as reliable, no oath that evoked any dread should it be broken. Everyone, when they had the upper hand, reckoned that there was no hope of any security by means of promises or oaths, and so concentrated on taking precautions not to suffer any injury rather than daring to trust anyone.

And, for the most part, those of more limited intelligence were the ones to survive: in their fear regarding their own deficiencies and their opponents' cleverness, lest they might be defeated in debate (e.g. in a political trial) or be forestalled in laying some plot by their opponents' cunning, they turned to action right away with a boldness born of desperation.

Their opponents, overconfident in their assurance that they could anticipate the plots of their less intelligent antagonists, and feeling that they could attain their ends by cunning rather than by force, tended to be caught off guard and so perished.

THUCYDIDES

The Plague at Athens*

This account follows immediately after Perikles's Funeral Oration (above).

47) Such was the funeral that took place during this winter, with which the first year of the war came to an end.

In the first days of summer the Lacedaemonians and their allies, with two-thirds of their forces as before, invaded Attica, under the command of Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus, king of Lacedaemon, and sat down and laid waste the country.

Not many days after their arrival in Attica the plague first began to show itself among the Athenians. It was said that it had broken out in many places previously in the neighborhood of Lemnos and elsewhere; but a pestilence of such extent and mortality was nowhere remembered.

Neither were the physicians at first of any service, ignorant as they were of the proper way to treat it, but they died themselves the most thickly, as they visited the sick most often; nor did any human art succeed

* Thucydides 2.47-55. Translated by Richard Crawley, 1874.

any better. Supplications in the temples, divinations, and so forth were found equally futile, till the overwhelming nature of the disaster at last put a stop to them altogether.

48) It first began, it is said, in the parts of Ethiopia above Egypt, and thence descended into Egypt and Libya and into most of the king's country.

Suddenly falling upon Athens, it first attacked the population in Piraeus,—which was the occasion of their saying that the Peloponnesians had poisoned the reservoirs, there being as yet no wells there—and afterwards appeared in the upper city, when the deaths became much more frequent.

All speculation as to its origin and its causes, if causes can be found adequate to produce so great a disturbance, I leave to other writers, whether lay or professional; for myself, I shall simply set down its nature, and explain the symptoms by which perhaps it may be recognized by the student, if it should ever break out again. This I can the better do, as I had the disease myself, and watched its operation in the case of others.

49) That year then is admitted to have been otherwise unprecedentedly free from sickness; and such few cases as occurred, all determined in this.

As a rule, however, there was no ostensible cause; but people in good health were all of a sudden attacked by violent heats in the head, and redness and inflammation in the eyes, the inward parts, such as the throat or tongue, becoming bloody and emitting an unnatural and fetid breath.

These symptoms were followed by sneezing and hoarseness, after which the pain soon reached the chest, and produced a hard cough. When it fixed in the stomach, it upset it; and discharges of bile of every kind named by physicians ensued, accompanied by very great distress.

In most cases also an ineffectual retching followed, producing violent spasms, which in some cases ceased soon after, in others much later.

Externally the body was not very hot to the touch, nor pale in its appearance, but reddish, livid, and breaking out into small pustules and ulcers. But internally it burned so that the patient could not bear to have on him clothing or linen even of the very lightest description; or indeed to be otherwise than stark naked. What they would have liked best would have been to throw themselves into cold water; as indeed was done by some of the neglected sick, who plunged into the rain-tanks in their agonies of unquenchable thirst; though it made no difference whether they drank little or much.

Besides this, the miserable feeling of not being able to rest or sleep never ceased to torment them. The body meanwhile did not waste away so long as the distemper was at its height, but held out to a marvel against its ravages; so that when they succumbed, as in most cases, on the seventh or eighth day to the internal inflammation, they had still some strength in them. But if they passed this stage, and the disease descended further into the bowels, inducing a violent ulceration there accompanied by severe diarrhea, this brought on a weakness which was generally fatal.

For the disorder first settled in the head, ran its course from thence through the whole of the body, and even where it did not prove mortal, it still left its mark on the extremities;

for it settled in the privy parts, the fingers and the toes, and many escaped with the loss of these, some too with that of their eyes. Others again were seized with an entire loss of memory on their first recovery, and did not know either themselves or their friends.

50) But while the nature of the distemper was such as to baffle all description, and its attacks almost too grievous for human nature to endure, it was still in the following circumstance that its difference from all ordinary disorders was most clearly shown. All the birds and beasts that prey upon human bodies, either abstained from touching them (though there were many lying unburied), or died after tasting them.

In proof of this, it was noticed that birds of this kind actually disappeared; they were not about the bodies, or indeed to be seen at all. But of course the effects which I have mentioned could best be studied in a domestic animal like the dog.

51) Such then, if we pass over the varieties of particular cases, which were many and peculiar, were the general features of the distemper. Meanwhile the town enjoyed an immunity from all the ordinary disorders; or if any case occurred, it ended in this.

Some died in neglect, others in the midst of every attention. No remedy was found that could be used as a specific; for what did good in one case, did harm in another.

Strong and weak constitutions proved equally incapable of resistance, all alike being swept away, although dieted with the utmost precaution.

By far the most terrible feature in the malady was the dejection which ensued when anyone felt himself sickening, for the despair into which they instantly fell took away their power of resistance, and left them a much easier prey to the disorder; besides which, there was the awful spectacle of men dying like sheep, through having caught the infection in nursing each other. This caused the greatest mortality.

On the one hand, if they were afraid to visit each other, they perished from neglect; indeed many houses were emptied of their inmates for want of a nurse: on the other, if they ventured to do so, death was the consequence. This was especially the case with such as made any pretensions to goodness: honor made them unsparing of themselves in their attendance in their friends' houses, where even the members of the family were at last worn out by the moans of the dying, and succumbed to the force of the disaster.

Yet it was with those who had recovered from the disease that the sick and the dying found most compassion. These knew what it was from experience, and had now no fear for themselves; for the same man was never attacked twice—never at least fatally. And such persons not only received the congratulations of others, but themselves also, in the elation of the moment, half entertained the vain hope that they were for the future safe from any disease whatsoever.

52) An aggravation of the existing calamity was the influx from the country into the city, and this was especially felt by the new arrivals.

As there were no houses to receive them, they had to be lodged at the hot season of the year in stifling cabins, where the mortality raged without restraint. The bodies of dying men lay one upon another, and half-dead creatures reeled about the streets and gathered round all the fountains in their longing for water.

The sacred places also in which they had quartered themselves were full of corpses of persons that had died there, just as they were; for as the disaster passed all bounds, men, not knowing what was to become of them, became utterly careless of everything, whether sacred or profane.

All the burial rites before in use were entirely upset, and they buried the bodies as best they could. Many from want of the proper appliances, through so many of their friends having died already, had recourse to the most shameless sepultures: sometimes getting the start of those who had raised a pile, they threw their own dead body upon the stranger's pyre and ignited it; sometimes they tossed the corpse which they were carrying on the top of another that was burning, and so went off.

53) Nor was this the only form of lawless extravagance which owed its origin to the plague. Men now coolly ventured on what they had formerly done in a corner, and not just as they pleased, seeing the rapid transitions produced by persons in prosperity suddenly dying and those who before had nothing succeeding to their property.

So they resolved to spend quickly and enjoy themselves, regarding their lives and riches as alike things of a day.

Perseverance in what men called honor was popular with none, it was so uncertain whether they would be spared to attain the object; but it was settled that present enjoyment, and all that contributed to it, was both honorable and useful.

Fear of gods or law of man there was none to restrain them. As for the first, they judged it to be just the same whether they worshipped them or not, as they saw all alike perishing; and for the last, no one expected to live to be brought to trial for his offences, but each felt that a far severer sentence had been already passed upon them all and hung ever over their heads, and before this fell it was only reasonable to enjoy life a little.

54) Such was the nature of the calamity, and heavily did it weigh on the Athenians; death raging within the city and devastation without.

Among other things which they remembered in their distress was, very naturally, the following verse which the old men said had long ago been uttered:

A Dorian war shall come and with it death.

So a dispute arose as to whether dearth and not death had not been the word in the verse; but at the present juncture, it was of course decided in favor of the latter; for the people made their recollection fit in with their sufferings. I fancy, however, that if another Dorian war should ever afterwards come upon us, and a dearth should happen to accompany it, the verse will probably be read accordingly.

The oracle also which had been given to the Lacedaemonians was now remembered by those who knew of it. When the God was asked whether they should go to war, he answered that if they put their might into it, victory would be theirs, and that he would himself be with them.

With this oracle events were supposed to tally. For the plague broke out so soon as the Peloponnesians invaded Attica, and never entering Peloponnese (not at least to an extent worth noticing), committed its worst ravages at Athens, and next to Athens, at the most populous of the other towns. Such was the history of the plague.

55) After ravaging the plain the Peloponnesians advanced into the Paralian region as far as Laurium, where the Athenian silver mines are, and first laid waste the side looking towards Peloponnese, next that which faces Euboea and Andros.

But Pericles, who was still general, held the same opinion as in the former invasion, and would not let the Athenians march out against them.

The Melian Dialog*

The Melian Dialogue is an account of the confrontation between the people of Melos, an island colony of Sparta but neutral in the war, and the Athenians in 416-415 BCE. Athens wanted the island for its strategic position.

The next summer Alcibiades sailed with twenty ships to Argos and seized the suspected persons still left of the Lacedaemonian faction to the number of three hundred, whom the Athenians forthwith lodged in the neighbouring islands of their empire. The Athenians also made an expedition against the isle of Melos with thirty ships of their own, six Chian, and two Lesbian vessels, sixteen hundred heavy infantry, three hundred archers, and twenty mounted archers from Athens, and about fifteen hundred heavy infantry from the allies and the islanders. The Melians are a colony of Lacedaemon that would not submit to the Athenians like the other islanders, and at first remained neutral and took no part in the struggle, but afterwards upon the Athenians using violence and plundering their territory, assumed an attitude of open hostility.

Cleomedes, son of Lycomedes, and Tisias, son of Tisimachus, the generals, encamping in their territory with the above armament, before doing any harm to their land, sent envoys to negotiate. These the Melians did not bring before the people, but bade them state the object of their mission to the magistrates and the few; upon which the Athenian envoys spoke as follows:

Athenians. Since the negotiations are not to go on before the people, in order that we may not be able to speak straight on without interruption, and deceive the ears of the multitude by seductive arguments which would pass without refutation (for we know that this is the meaning of our being brought before the few), what if you who sit there were to pursue a method more cautious still? Make no set speech yourselves, but take us up at whatever you do not like, and settle that before going any farther. And first tell us if this proposition of ours suits you.

The Melian commissioners answered: To the fairness of quietly instructing each other as you propose there is nothing to object; but your military preparations are too far advanced to agree with what you say, as we see you are come to be judges in your own cause, and that all we can reasonably expect from this negotiation is

war, if we prove to have right on our side and refuse to submit, and in the contrary case, slavery.

Athenians. If you have met to reason about presentiments of the future, or for anything else than to consult for the safety of your state upon the facts that you see before you, we will give over; otherwise we will go on.

Melians. It is natural and excusable for men in our position to turn more ways than one both in thought and utterance. However, the question in this conference is, as you say, the safety of our country; and the discussion, if you please, can proceed in the way which you propose.

Athenians. For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretences- either of how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Mede, or are now attacking you because of wrong that you have done us- and make a long speech which would not be believed; and in return we hope that you, instead of thinking to influence us by saying that you did not join the Lacedaemonians, although their colonists, or that you have done us no wrong, will aim at what is feasible, holding in view the real sentiments of us both; since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.

Melians. As we think, at any rate, it is expedient- we speak as we are obliged, since you enjoin us to let right alone and talk only of interest- that you should not destroy what is our common protection, the privilege of being allowed in danger to invoke what is fair and right, and even to profit by arguments not strictly valid if they can be got to pass current. And you are as much interested in this as any, as your fall would be a signal for the heaviest vengeance and an example for the world to meditate upon.

Athenians. The end of our empire, if end it should, does not frighten us: a rival empire like Lacedaemon, even if Lacedaemon was our real antagonist, is not so terrible to the vanquished as subjects who by themselves attack and overpower their rulers. This, however, is a risk that we are content to take. We will now proceed to show you that we are come here in the interest of our empire, and that we shall say what we are now going to say, for the preservation of your country; as we would fain exercise that empire over you without trouble, and see you preserved for the good of us both.

Melians. And how, pray, could it turn out as good for us to serve as for you to rule?

Athenians. Because you would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you.

* Thucydides, Book 5, chapters 84-116. Translated by Richard Crawley, 1874.

Melians. So that you would not consent to our being neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side.

Athenians. No; for your hostility cannot so much hurt us as your friendship will be an argument to our subjects of our weakness, and your enmity of our power.

Melians. Is that your subjects' idea of equity, to put those who have nothing to do with you in the same category with peoples that are most of them your own colonists, and some conquered rebels?

Athenians. As far as right goes they think one has as much of it as the other, and that if any maintain their independence it is because they are strong, and that if we do not molest them it is because we are afraid; so that besides extending our empire we should gain in security by your subjection; the fact that you are islanders and weaker than others rendering it all the more important that you should not succeed in baffling the masters of the sea.

Melians. But do you consider that there is no security in the policy which we indicate? For here again if you debar us from talking about justice and invite us to obey your interest, we also must explain ours, and try to persuade you, if the two happen to coincide. How can you avoid making enemies of all existing neutrals who shall look at case from it that one day or another you will attack them? And what is this but to make greater the enemies that you have already, and to force others to become so who would otherwise have never thought of it?

Athenians. Why, the fact is that continentals generally give us but little alarm; the liberty which they enjoy will long prevent their taking precautions against us; it is rather islanders like yourselves, outside our empire, and subjects smarting under the yoke, who would be the most likely to take a rash step and lead themselves and us into obvious danger.

Melians. Well then, if you risk so much to retain your empire, and your subjects to get rid of it, it were surely great baseness and cowardice in us who are still free not to try everything that can be tried, before submitting to your yoke.

Athenians. Not if you are well advised, the contest not being an equal one, with honour as the prize and shame as the penalty, but a question of self-preservation and of not resisting those who are far stronger than you are.

Melians. But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes more impartial than the disproportion of numbers might lead one to suppose; to submit is to give ourselves over to despair, while action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect.

Athenians. Hope, danger's comforter, may be indulged in by those who have abundant resources, if not without loss at all events without ruin; but its nature is to be extravagant, and those who go so far as to put their all upon the venture see it in its true colours only when they are ruined; but so long as the discovery would enable them to guard against it, it is never found wanting. Let not this be the case with you, who are weak and hang on a single turn of the scale; nor be like the vulgar, who, abandoning such security as human means may still afford, when visible hopes fail them in extremity, turn to invisible, to prophecies and oracles, and other such inventions that delude men with hopes to their destruction.

Melians. You may be sure that we are as well aware as you of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust, and that what we want in power will be made up by the alliance of the Lacedaemonians, who are bound, if only for very shame, to come to the aid of their kindred. Our confidence, therefore, after all is not so utterly irrational.

Athenians. When you speak of the favour of the gods, we may as fairly hope for that as yourselves; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods, or practise among themselves. Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist for ever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do. Thus, as far as the gods are concerned, we have no fear and no reason to fear that we shall be at a disadvantage. But when we come to your notion about the Lacedaemonians, which leads you to believe that shame will make them help you, here we bless your simplicity but do not envy your folly. The Lacedaemonians, when their own interests or their country's laws are in question, are the worthiest men alive; of their conduct towards others much might be said, but no clearer idea of it could be given than by shortly saying that of all the men we know they are most conspicuous in considering what is agreeable honourable, and what is expedient just. Such a way of thinking does not promise much for the safety which you now unreasonably count upon.

Melians. But it is for this very reason that we now trust to their respect for expediency to prevent them from betraying the Melians, their colonists, and

thereby losing the confidence of their friends in Hellas and helping their enemies.

Athenians. Then you do not adopt the view that expediency goes with security, while justice and honour cannot be followed without danger; and danger the Lacedaemonians generally court as little as possible.

Melians. But we believe that they would be more likely to face even danger for our sake, and with more confidence than for others, as our nearness to Peloponnese makes it easier for them to act, and our common blood ensures our fidelity.

Athenians. Yes, but what an intending ally trusts to is not the goodwill of those who ask his aid, but a decided superiority of power for action; and the Lacedaemonians look to this even more than others. At least, such is their distrust of their home resources that it is only with numerous allies that they attack a neighbour; now is it likely that while we are masters of the sea they will cross over to an island?

Melians. But they would have others to send. The Cretan Sea is a wide one, and it is more difficult for those who command it to intercept others, than for those who wish to elude them to do so safely. And should the Lacedaemonians miscarry in this, they would fall upon your land, and upon those left of your allies whom Brasidas did not reach; and instead of places which are not yours, you will have to fight for your own country and your own confederacy.

Athenians. Some diversion of the kind you speak of you may one day experience, only to learn, as others have done, that the Athenians never once yet withdrew from a siege for fear of any. But we are struck by the fact that, after saying you would consult for the safety of your country, in all this discussion you have mentioned nothing which men might trust in and think to be saved by. Your strongest arguments depend upon hope and the future, and your actual resources are too scanty, as compared with those arrayed against you, for you to come out victorious. You will therefore show great blindness of judgment, unless, after allowing us to retire, you can find some counsel more prudent than this. You will surely not be caught by that idea of disgrace, which in dangers that are disgraceful, and at the same time too plain to be mistaken, proves so fatal to mankind; since in too many cases the very men that have their eyes perfectly open to what they are rushing into, let the thing called disgrace, by the mere influence of a seductive name, lead them on to a point at which they become so enslaved by the phrase as in fact to fall wilfully into hopeless disaster, and incur disgrace more disgraceful as the companion of error, than when it comes as the result of misfortune. This, if you are well advised, you

will guard against; and you will not think it dishonourable to submit to the greatest city in Hellas, when it makes you the moderate offer of becoming its tributary ally, without ceasing to enjoy the country that belongs to you; nor when you have the choice given you between war and security, will you be so blinded as to choose the worse. And it is certain that those who do not yield to their equals, who keep terms with their superiors, and are moderate towards their inferiors, on the whole succeed best. Think over the matter, therefore, after our withdrawal, and reflect once and again that it is for your country that you are consulting, that you have not more than one, and that upon this one deliberation depends its prosperity or ruin.

The Athenians now withdrew from the conference; and the Melians, left to themselves, came to a decision corresponding with what they had maintained in the discussion, and answered: "Our resolution, Athenians, is the same as it was at first. We will not in a moment deprive of freedom a city that has been inhabited these seven hundred years; but we put our trust in the fortune by which the gods have preserved it until now, and in the help of men, that is, of the Lacedaemonians; and so we will try and save ourselves. Meanwhile we invite you to allow us to be friends to you and foes to neither party, and to retire from our country after making such a treaty as shall seem fit to us both."

Such was the answer of the Melians. The Athenians now departing from the conference said: "Well, you alone, as it seems to us, judging from these resolutions, regard what is future as more certain than what is before your eyes, and what is out of sight, in your eagerness, as already coming to pass; and as you have staked most on, and trusted most in, the Lacedaemonians, your fortune, and your hopes, so will you be most completely deceived."

The Athenian envoys now returned to the army; and the Melians showing no signs of yielding, the generals at once betook themselves to hostilities, and drew a line of circumvallation round the Melians, dividing the work among the different states. Subsequently the Athenians returned with most of their army, leaving behind them a certain number of their own citizens and of the allies to keep guard by land and sea. The force thus left stayed on and besieged the place.

About the same time the Argives invaded the territory of Phlius and lost eighty men cut off in an ambush by the Phliasians and Argive exiles. Meanwhile the Athenians at Pylos took so much plunder from the Lacedaemonians that the latter, although they still refrained from breaking off the treaty and going to war with Athens, yet proclaimed

that any of their people that chose might plunder the Athenians. The Corinthians also commenced hostilities with the Athenians for private quarrels of their own; but the rest of the Peloponnesians stayed quiet. Meanwhile the Melians attacked by night and took the part of the Athenian lines over against the market, and killed some of the men, and brought in corn and all else that they could find useful to them, and so returned and kept quiet, while the Athenians took measures to keep better guard in future.

Summer was now over. The next winter the Lacedaemonians intended to invade the Argive territory, but arriving at the frontier found the sacrifices for crossing unfavourable, and went back again. This intention of theirs gave the Argives suspicions of certain of their fellow citizens, some of whom they arrested; others, however, escaped them. About the same time the Melians again took another part of the Athenian lines which were but feebly garrisoned. Reinforcements afterwards arriving from Athens in consequence, under the command of Philocrates, son of Demeas, the siege was now pressed vigorously; and some treachery taking place inside, the Melians surrendered at discretion to the Athenians, who put to death all the grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves, and subsequently sent out five hundred colonists and inhabited the place themselves.

XENOPHON

The Battle of Leuctra*

In 371 BCE at Leuctra, in Boeotia, on the road from Plataea to Thespieae, the Thebans met and defeated the Spartans. The latter never recovered from the blow this disaster gave to their prestige. The credit for the victory falls to the Theban general Epaminondas, though he is not named by the historian Xenophon (*Hellenica*, c. 360 BCE), who—as a warm admirer of the Spartans—was not anxious to glorify their most formidable enemy.

When the Spartan king [Cleombrotus] observed that the Thebans, so far from giving autonomy to the Boeotian city states [as demanded], were not even disbanding their army and had clearly the purpose of fighting a general engagement, he felt justified in marching his troops into Boeotia [from Phocis where he had been]. The point of ingress which he adopted

was not that which the Thebans expected from Phocis, and where they were keeping a guard at a defile, but marching through Thisbae, by a hilly and unsuspected route, he arrived before Creusis, taking that fortress and twelve Theban war ships to boot. After this, he advanced from the seaboard, and encamped in Leuctra in Thesopian territory. The Thebans encamped on a rising ground immediately opposite at no great distance, and were supported by no allies, save their [fellow] Boeotians.

At this juncture the friends of Cleombrotus came to him and urged upon him strong reasons for delivering battle. “If you let the Thebans escape without fighting,” they said, “you will run great risks of suffering the extreme penalty at the hands of the state....In times past you have missed doing anything notable, and let good chances slip. If you have any care for yourself, or any attachment to your fatherland, march you must against the enemy.” Thus spoke his friends, and his enemies remarked, “Now our fine fellow will show whether he is really so partial to the Thebans as is alleged.”

With these words ringing in his ears, Cleombrotus felt driven to join battle. On their side the Theban leaders calculated that if they did not fight, their provincial cities would hold aloof from them, and Thebes itself would be besieged; while if the populace of Thebes failed to get provisions there was a good chance the city itself would turn against [its own leaders]; and seeing that many of them had already tasted the bitterness of exile, they concluded it were better to die on the battlefield than renew the exile’s life. Besides this, they were somewhat encouraged by an oracle, predicting that “the Lacedaemonians would be defeated on the spot where stood the monument of the maidens,”—who, as the story goes, being outraged by certain Lacedaemonians, had slain themselves. This sepulchral monument the Thebans decked with ornaments before the battle. Furthermore, tidings were brought from the city that all the temples had opened of their own accord; and the priestesses asserted that the gods foretold victory. Cleombrotus held his last council “whether to fight or not” after the morning meal. In the heat of noon a little wine goes a long way; and people said it took a somewhat provocative effect upon their spirits.

Both sides were now arming, and there were unmistakable signs of approaching battle, when, as the first incident, there issued from the Boeotian lines a long train bent on departure—they were furnishers of the market, a detachment of baggage bearers and in general such people as had no hankering to join in the fight. [A band of the Spartan allies headed them off, and drove them back to the Boeotian camp ...] the result being to make the Boeotian army more

* *Hellenica*, Book VI, Chap. IV. From: William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, 2 Vols., (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1912-1913), Vol. I: *Greece and the East*, pp. 279-284. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton.

numerous and closely packed than before. The next move was as a result of the open plain between the two armies—the Lacedaemonians posted their cavalry in front of their squares of infantry, and the Thebans imitated them. Only there was this difference—the Theban horse were in a high state of training and efficiency, thanks to their war with the Orchomenians, and also their war with Thespieae; the Lacedaemonian cavalry was at its very worst just now. The horses were reared and kept by the richest citizens; but whenever the levy was called out, a trooper appeared who took the horse with any sort of arms that might be presented to him, and set off on an expedition at a moment's notice. These troopers, too, were the least able-bodied of the men—just raw recruits simply set astride their horses, and wanting in all soldierly ambition. Such was the cavalry of either antagonist.

The heavy infantry of the Lacedaemonians, it is said, advanced by sections three abreast, allowing a total depth to the whole line of not more than twelve. The Thebans were formed in close order of not less than fifty shields deep, calculating that victory over the [Spartan] king's division of his army would involve the easy conquest of the rest.

Cleombrotus had hardly begun to lead his division against the foe, when, before in fact the troops with him were aware of his advance, the cavalry had already come into collision, and that of the Lacedaemonians was speedily worsted. In their flight they became involved with their own heavy infantry; and, to make matters worse, the Theban regiments were already attacking vigorously. Still strong evidence exists for supposing that Cleombrotus and his division were, in the first instance, victorious in the battle, if we consider the fact that they could never have picked him up and brought him back alive unless his vanguard had been masters of the situation for the moment.

When, however, Deinon the polemarch, and Sphodrias, a member of the king's council, with his son Cleonymus, had fallen, then it was that the cavalry and the polemarch's adjutants, as they are called, with the rest, under pressure of the mass against them, began retreating. And the left wing of the Lacedaemonians, seeing the right borne down in this way, also swerved. Still, in spite of the numbers slain, and broken as they were, as soon as they had crossed the trench which protected their camp in front, they grounded arms on the spot whence they had rushed to battle. This camp, it should be borne in mind, did not lie on the level, but was pitched on a somewhat steep incline.

At this juncture there were some Lacedaemonians, who, looking upon such a disaster as intolerable,

maintained that they ought to prevent the enemy from erecting a trophy, and try to recover the dead, not under a flag of truce, but by another battle. The polemarchs, however, seeing that nearly 1000 of the total Lacedaemonian troops were slain, and seeing, too, that of the 700 regular Spartans who were on the field some 400 lay dead; aware likewise of the despondency which reigned among the allies, and the general disinclination on their part to fight longer—a frame of mind not far from positive satisfaction in some cases at what had happened—under the circumstances, I say, the polemarchs called a council of the ablest representatives of the shattered army, and deliberated on what should be done. Finally, the unanimous opinion was to pick up the dead under a flag of truce, and they sent a herald to treat for terms. The Thebans after that set up a trophy, and gave back the bodies under a truce.

After these events a messenger was dispatched to Lacedaemon with news of the calamity. He reached his destination on the last day of the gymnopaediae [midsummer festival] just when the chorus of grown men had entered the theater. The ephors heard the mournful tidings not without grief or pain, as needs they must, I take it; but for all that they did not dismiss the chorus, but allowed the contest to run out its natural course. What they did was to deliver the names of those who had fallen to their friends and families, with a word of warning to the women not to make any loud lamentation, but to bear their sorrow in silence; and the next day it was a striking spectacle to see those who had relations among the slain moving to and fro in public with bright and radiant looks, whilst of those whose friends were reported to be living, barely a man was seen, and these flitted by with lowered heads and scowling brows, as if in humiliation.

PLATO

The Allegory of the Cave*

From *The Republic*, 360 BCE. The allegory of the cave is written as a fictional dialogue between Plato's teacher Socrates ("I") and Plato's brother Glaucon ("he").

Socrates. And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened:—Behold! human beings living in a underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from

* Translated by Benjamin Jowett.

their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

Glaucon. I see.

Socrates. And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

Glaucon. You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice they heard came from the passing shadow?

No question, he replied.

To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow it: the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision, what will be his reply? And you may further imagine

that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

Far truer.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take and take in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

True, he now said.

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he's forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Last of he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

Clearly, he said, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and

which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer, "Better to be the poor servant of a poor master, and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner"?

Yes, he said, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Imagine once more, I said, such an one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

To be sure, he said.

And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable) would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

No question, he said.

This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed... . But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally, either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

I agree, he said, as far as I can understand you.

Moreover, I said, you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.

DEMOSTHENES

The First Philippic*

352 BC, Athenian troops successfully opposed Philip II of Macedon at Thermopylae, but the Macedonian victory over the Phocians at the Battle of Crocus Field shook Demosthenes. The first of a series of speeches on the menace posed by Philip (351–350 BCE) was a rousing call for resistance, asking his countrymen to take the necessary action to protect their own freedom.

If the question before us were a new one, men of Athens, I should have waited until most of the regular speakers had delivered their opinions, and if satisfied with any of their proposals, I should have remained silent, but if not satisfied, I should then have tried to express my own views. Since, however, it is our fortune to be still debating a point on which they have often spoken before, I can safely claim your indulgence if I am the first to rise and address you. For if in the past their advice had been sound, there would be no need for deliberation today.

Now in the first place, Athenians, there is no need to despair of our present position, however hopeless it may seem. For that which is worst in the days that are past and gone is just what affords the best assurance for the future. And what is that? It is that your affairs are in this evil plight just because you, men of Athens, utterly fail to do your duty; since surely, were you so placed in spite of every effort on your part, it would be hopeless to look for improvement.

In the next place, bear this in mind. Some of you have been told, others know and remember, how formidable the Spartans were, not many years ago, and yet how at the call of honor and duty you played a part not unworthy of your country, and entered the lists against them in defence of your rights. I remind you of this, Athenians, because I want you to know and realize that, as no danger can assail you while you are on your guard, so if you are remiss no success can attend you. Learn a lesson from the former strength of the Lacedaemonians, which you mastered by strict attention to your affairs, and the present arrogance of our enemy, which discomposes us because we ignore every call of duty.

But if anyone here, Athenians, is inclined to think Philip too formidable, having regard to the extent of his existing resources and to our loss of all our strongholds, he is indeed right, yet he must reflect

* Demosthenes. Demosthenes with an English translation by J. H. Vince, M.A. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1930.

that we too, men of Athens, once held Pydna, Potidaea, and Methone and had in our own hands all the surrounding territory, and that many of the native tribes now in his service were then free and independent and were indeed more inclined to side with us than with Philip.

If, therefore, Philip had then come to the conclusion that it was a difficult task to fight the Athenians while they held such strong outposts in his own territory and he was destitute of allies, in that case he would never have gained his present successes, never acquired his present power. But, men of Athens, Philip saw clearly that all these outposts were but the open prizes of war, that by natural right the property of the absent belongs to those who are on the spot, and the property of the careless to those who can face toil and danger.

It was precisely by acting on this principle that he has mastered and now holds them all. Some he has seized by right of arms, others he has won by alliance and friendship. For indeed alliance and respect are willingly offered by all men to those whom they see ready and prompt to take action.

And you too, men of Athens, if you are willing to adopt this principle, now if never before, if each citizen is ready to throw off his diffidence and serve the state as he ought and as he best may, the rich man paying, the strong man fighting, if, briefly and plainly, you will consent to become your own masters, and if each man will cease to expect that, while he does nothing himself, his neighbor will do everything for him, then, God willing, you will recover your own, you will restore what has been frittered away, and you will turn the tables upon Philip.

Do not believe that his present power is fixed and unchangeable like that of a god. No, men of Athens; he is a mark for the hatred and fear and envy even of those who now seem devoted to him. One must assume that even his adherents are subject to the same passions as any other men. At present, however, all these feelings are repressed and have no outlet, thanks to your indolence and apathy, which I urge you to throw off at once.

For observe, Athenians, the height to which the fellow's insolence has soared; he leaves you no choice of action or inaction; he blusters and talks big, according to all accounts; he cannot rest content with what he has conquered; he is always taking in more, everywhere casting his net round us, while we sit idle and do nothing.

When, Athenians, will you take the necessary action? What are you waiting for? Until you are compelled, I presume. But what are we to think of what is happening now? For my own part I think that

for a free people there can be no greater compulsion than shame for their position. Or tell me, are you content to run round and ask one another, "Is there any news today?" Could there be any news more startling than that a Macedonian is triumphing over Athenians and settling the destiny of Hellas?

"Is Philip dead?" you ask. "No, indeed; but he is ill." And what is that to you? Even if something happens to him, you will soon raise up a second Philip, if that is the way you attend to your affairs; for even this Philip has not grown great through his own unaided strength so much as through our carelessness.

Nor is this all. If anything happened to him, or if Fortune, which always cares for us better than we care for ourselves, should bring that result about, remember that you must be on the spot if you want to take advantage of the general confusion and to control the situation at your pleasure; but in your present condition you would be unable, even if the opportunity offered, to take over Amphipolis, having neither a force nor a policy ready to hand.

Well, assuming that you are thoroughly convinced that you must all be ready and willing to make this necessary effort, I say no more on that point. But as to the nature and size of the force which I think adequate to relieve the situation, the means of defraying the cost, and the best and speediest method of providing for its equipment, I shall now endeavor to state my views, making just this appeal to you, Athenians.

Wait till you have heard everything before you pass judgement. Do not be premature; and even if at the outset I seem to be suggesting a novel kind of expeditionary force, do not imagine that I am trying to postpone our operations. It is not those who cry "at once" or "today" that really speak to the purpose, for no dispatch of forces now could prevent what has already happened;

but it is the man who can indicate the nature, the size, and the source of the expedition that will be able to keep the field until we either defeat the enemy or consent to a termination of hostilities; for that is how we shall avoid trouble in the future. Now I believe that I can indicate this, without prejudice to anyone else's proposal. That is a bold promise, but it will soon be put to a practical test, and you shall be my judges.

First then, men of Athens, I propose to equip fifty war-galleys; next you must make up your minds to embark and sail in them yourselves, if necessary. Further I recommend the provision of transports and other vessels, sufficient for the conveyance of half our cavalry.

All this is a necessary provision against Philip's sudden raids from Macedonia against Thermopylae, the Chersonese, Olynthus, or where he will. You must present to his mind the consideration that you may possibly shake off your excessive apathy and strike out as you did at Euboea, and before that, as we are told, at Haliartus, and quite recently at Thermopylae.

That, even if you should not act as I, personally, think you ought, is not an altogether trivial matter; for its purpose is that he may either hold his hand through fear, knowing that you are on the alert—he will know it sure enough, for there are some on our side, yes, too many, who report everything to him—or that he may overlook it and so be taken off his guard, provided there is nothing to hinder you from sailing against his country, if he gives you the chance.

Such, in my opinion, are the resolutions which you ought to adopt, and the force which must be equipped, at once. But in addition to this, Athenians, I propose that you should get ready a corps to carry on a continuous war of annoyance against Philip. Not an imposing army—on paper—of ten or twenty thousand mercenaries! It shall be a real Athenian contingent, and whether you appoint one general or more, whether it is this man or that or the other, him it shall strictly follow and obey. I also urge you to provide for its maintenance.

And what will this force be, and how large? How will it be maintained, and how far will it consent to effect its purpose? I will tell you, describing each detail separately. Of mercenaries I propose—and beware of the mistake that has so often thwarted your efforts. Thinking that the utmost is too little for the occasion, you choose the biggest scheme in your resolutions, but when it comes to performance, you fail to realize even the smallest. You should rather act and provide on a small scale, adding more if this proves insufficient.

So I propose that the whole force should consist of two thousand men, but of these five hundred must be Athenians, chosen from any suitable age and serving in relays for a specified period—not a long one, but just so long as seems advisable; the rest should be mercenaries. Attached to them will be two hundred cavalry, fifty at least of them being Athenians, serving on the same terms as the infantry. There will also be cavalry transports provided.

So far, so good; and what besides? Ten fast-sailing war-galleys. Since Philip has a fleet, we must have fast vessels if our force is to sail in safety. Now how is this army to be maintained? That also I will explain fully, when I have told you why I think so small a force

sufficient, and why I insist that those serving shall be citizens.

I name a force of this size, Athenians, because it is not in our power now to provide one fit to meet him in pitched battle: we must adopt guerilla tactics to start with. The force must therefore be neither unwieldy—for we cannot afford the pay and maintenance—nor altogether insignificant. ...

Truly, men of Athens, I do think that Philip is drunk with the magnitude of his achievements and dreams of further triumphs, when, elated by his success, he finds that there is none to bar his way; but I cannot for a moment believe that he is deliberately acting in such a way that all the fools at Athens know what he is going to do next. For of all fools the rumor-mongers are the worst.

But if, putting rumors aside, we recognize that this man is our enemy, who has for years been robbing and insulting us, that wherever we once hoped to find help we have found hindrance, that the future lies in our own hands, and if we refuse to fight now in Thrace, we shall perhaps be forced to fight here at home—if, I say, we recognize these facts, then we shall have done with idle words and shall come to a right decision. Our business is not to speculate on what the future may bring forth, but to be certain that it will bring disaster, unless you face the facts and consent to do your duty.

For my own part, I have never yet chosen to court your favor by saying anything that I was not quite convinced would be to your advantage; and today, keeping nothing back, I have given free utterance to my plain sentiments. Yet, certain as I am that it is to your interest to receive the best advice, I could have wished that I were equally certain that to offer such advice is also to the interest of the speaker; for then I should have felt much happier. But, as it is, in the uncertainty of what the result of my proposal may be for myself, yet in the conviction that it will be to your interest to adopt it, I have ventured to address you. Whatever shall be to the advantage of all, may that prevail!

Address to Philip*

In his letter to Philip II (338 BCE) Isocrates, one of the great Athenian philosophers and rhetoricians, argued that the Greeks needed to be brought together in a war of revenge on Persia, and that it seemed increasingly that only Philip could do that.

... I affirm that, without neglecting any of your own interests, you ought to make an effort to reconcile Argos and Lacedaemon and Thebes and Athens; for if you can bring these cities together, you will not find it hard to unite the others as well; for all the rest are under the protection of the aforesaid cities, and fly for refuge, when they are alarmed, to one or other of these powers, and they all draw upon them for succor. So that if you can persuade four cities only to take a sane view of things, you will deliver the others also from many evils.

Now you will realize that it is not becoming in you to disregard any of these cities if you will review their conduct in relation to your ancestors; for you will find that each one of them is to be credited with great friendship and important services to your house: Argos is the land of your fathers, and is entitled to as much consideration at your hands as are your own ancestors; the Thebans honor the founder of your race, both by processions and by sacrifices, beyond all the other gods; the Lacedaemonians have conferred upon his descendants the kingship and the power of command for all time; and as for our city, we are informed by those whom we credit in matters of ancient history that she aided Heracles to win his immortality in what way you can easily learn at another time; it would be unseasonable for me to relate it now, and that she aided his children to preserve their lives. Yes, Athens single-handed sustained the greatest dangers against the power of Eurystheus, put an end to his insolence, and freed Heracles' sons from the fears by which they were continually beset. Because of these services we deserve the gratitude, not only of those who then were preserved from destruction, but also of those who are now living; for to us it is due both that they are alive and that they enjoy the blessings which are now theirs, since they never could have seen the light of day at all had not the sons of Heracles been preserved from death.

Therefore, seeing that these cities have each and all shown such a spirit, no quarrel should ever have arisen between you and any one of them. But unfortunately we are all prone by nature to do wrong more often than right; and so it is fair to charge the mistakes of the past to our common weakness. Yet for the future you must be on your guard to prevent a like occurrence, and must consider what service you can render them which will make it manifest that you have acted in a manner worthy both of yourself and of what these cities have done. And the opportunity now serves you; for you would only be repaying the debt of gratitude which you owed them, but, because so much time has elapsed, they will credit you with being first in friendly offices. And it is a good thing to have the appearance of conferring benefits upon the greatest states of Hellas and at the same time to profit yourself no less than them. But apart from this, if anything unpleasant has arisen between you and any of them, you will wipe it out completely; for friendly acts in the present crisis will make you forget the wrongs which you have done each other in the past. Yes, and this also is beyond question, that all men hold in fondest memory those benefits which they receive in times of trouble. And you see how utterly wretched these states have become because of their warfare, and how like they are to men engaged in a personal encounter; for no one can reconcile the parties to a quarrel while their wrath is rising; but after they have punished each other badly, they need no mediator, but separate of their own accord. And that is just what I think these states also will do unless you first take them in hand.

Now perhaps someone will venture to object to what I have proposed, saying that I am trying to persuade you to set yourself to an impossible task, since the Argives could never be friendly to the Lacedaemonians, nor the Lacedaemonians to the Thebans, and since, in general, those who have been accustomed throughout their whole existence to press their own selfish interests can never share and share alike with each other. Well, I myself do not believe that at the time when our city was the first power in Hellas, or again when Lacedaemon occupied that position, any such result could have been accomplished, since the one or the other of these two cities could easily have blocked the attempt; but as things are now, I am not of the same mind regarding them. For I know that they have all been brought down to the same level by their misfortunes, and so I think that they would much prefer the mutual advantages which would come from a unity of purpose to the selfish gains which accrued from their policy in those days. Furthermore, while I grant that no one else in the world could reconcile these cities, yet nothing of the sort is difficult for you; for I see

* Isocrates. Isocrates with an English Translation in three volumes, by George Norlin, Ph.D., LL.D. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1980.

that you have carried through to a successful end many undertakings which the rest of the world looked upon as hopeless and unthinkable, and therefore it would be nothing strange if you should be able single-handed to affect this union. In fact, men of high purposes and exceptional gifts ought not to undertake enterprises which any of the common run might carry out with success, but rather those which no one would attempt save men with endowments and power such as you possess.

But I marvel that those who think that none of these proposals could possibly be carried out are not aware, either by their own knowledge or by tradition, that there have been many terrible wars after which the participants have come to an understanding and rendered great services to one another. For what could exceed the enmity which the Hellenes felt toward Xerxes? Yet everyone knows that we and the Lacedaemonians came to prize his friendship more than that of those who helped us to establish our respective empires. But why speak of ancient history, or of our dealings with the barbarians? If one should scan and review the misfortunes of the Hellenes in general, these will appear as nothing in comparison with those which we Athenians have experienced through the Thebans and the Lacedaemonians. Nevertheless, when the Lacedaemonians took the field against the Thebans and were minded to humiliate Boeotia and break up the league of her cities, we sent a relief expedition and thwarted the desires of the Lacedaemonians. And again, when fortune shifted her favor and the Thebans and the Peloponnesians were one and all trying to devastate Lacedaemon, we alone among the Hellenes formed an alliance with the Lacedaemonians and helped to save them from destruction. So then, seeing that such great reversals are wont to occur, and that our states care nothing about their former enmities or about their oaths or about anything else save what they conceive to be expedient for themselves, and that expediency is the sole object to which they give their affections and devote all their zeal, no man, unless obsessed by utter folly, could fail to believe that now also they will show the same disposition, especially if you take the lead in their reconciliation, while selfish interests urge and present ills constrain them to this course. I, for my part, believe that, with these influences fighting on your side, everything will turn out as it should.

But I think that you can get most light on the question whether these cities are inclined toward peace with each other or toward war, if I review, not merely in general terms nor yet with excessive detail, the principal facts in their present situation. And first

of all, let us consider the condition of the Lacedaemonians.

The Lacedaemonians were the leaders of the Hellenes, not long ago, on both land and sea, and yet they suffered so great a reversal of fortune when they met defeat at Leuctra that they were deprived of their power over the Hellenes, and lost such of their warriors as chose to die rather than survive defeat at the hands of those over whom they had once been masters. Furthermore, they were obliged to look on while all the Peloponnesians, who formerly had followed the lead of Lacedaemon against the rest of the world, united with the Thebans and invaded their territory; and against these the Lacedaemonians were compelled to risk battle, not in the country to save the crops, but in the heart of the city, before the very seat of their government, to save their wives and children—a crisis in which defeat meant instant destruction, and victory has none the more delivered them from their ills; nay, they are now warred upon by their neighbors; they are distrusted by all the Peloponnesians; they are hated by most of the Hellenes; they are harried and plundered day and night by their own serfs; and not a day passes that they do not have to take the field or fight against some force or other, or march to the rescue of their perishing comrades. But the worst of their afflictions is that they live in continual fear that the Thebans may patch up their quarrel with the Phocians and, returning again, ring them about with still greater calamities than have befallen them in the past. How, then, can we refuse to believe that people so hard pressed would gladly see at the head of a movement for peace a man who commands confidence and has the power to put an end to the wars in which they are involved?

Now as to the Argives, you will see that in some respects they are no better off than the Lacedaemonians, while in others their condition is worse; for they have been in a state of war with their neighbors from the day they founded their city, just as have the Lacedaemonians; but there is this difference, that the neighbors of the Lacedaemonians are weaker than they, while those of the Argives are stronger—a condition which all would admit to be the greatest of misfortunes. And so unsuccessful are they in their warfare that hardly a year passes that they are not compelled to witness their own territory being ravaged and laid waste. But what is most deplorable of all is that, during the intervals when their enemies cease from harrying them, they themselves put to death the most eminent and wealthy of their citizens; and they have more pleasure in doing this than any other people have in slaying their foes. The cause of their living in such disorder is none other than the

state of war; and if you can put a stop to this, you will not only deliver them from these evils but you will cause them to adopt a better policy with respect to their other interests as well.

And as for the condition of the Thebans, surely you have not failed to note that also. They won a splendid victory and covered themselves with glory, but because they did not make good use of their success they are now in no better case than those who have suffered defeat and failure. For no sooner had they triumphed over their foes than, neglecting everything else, they began to annoy the cities of the Peloponnese; they made bold to reduce Thessaly to subjection; they threatened their neighbors, the Megarians; they robbed our city of a portion of its territory; they ravaged Euboea; they sent men-of-war to Byzantium, as if they purposed to rule both land and sea; and, finally, they began war upon the Phocians, expecting that in a short time they would conquer their cities, occupy all the surrounding territory, and prevail over all the treasures at Delphi by the outlay of their own funds. But none of these hopes has been realized; instead of seizing the cities of the Phocians they have lost cities of their own; and now when they invade the enemy's territory they inflict less damage upon them than they suffer when they are retreating to their own country; for while they are in Phocian territory they succeed in killing a few hireling soldiers who are better off dead than alive, but when they retreat they lose of their own citizens those who are most esteemed and most ready to die for their fatherland. And so completely have their fortunes shifted, that whereas they once hoped that all Hellas would be subject to them, now they rest upon you the hopes of their own deliverance. Therefore I think that the Thebans also will do with alacrity whatever you command or advise.

It would still remain for me to speak about our city, had she not come to her senses before the others and made peace; but now I need only say this: I think that she will join forces with you in carrying out your policy, especially if she can be made to see that your object is to prepare for the campaign against the barbarians.

That it is not, therefore, impossible for you to bring these cities together, I think has become evident to you from what I have said. But more than that, I believe I can convince you by many examples that it will also be easy for you to do this. For if it can be shown that other men in the past have undertaken enterprises which were not, indeed, more noble or more righteous than that which I have advised, but of greater magnitude and difficulty, and have actually brought them to pass, what ground will be left to my opponents to argue that you will not accomplish the

easier task more quickly than other men the harder?
...

Therefore, since the others are so lacking in spirit, I think it is opportune for you to head the war against the King; and, while it is only natural for the other descendants of Heracles, and for men who are under the bonds of their polities and laws, to cleave fondly to that state in which they happen to dwell, it is your privilege, as one who has been blessed with untrammelled freedom, to consider all Hellas your fatherland, as did the founder of your race, and to be as ready to brave perils for her sake as for the things about which you are personally most concerned.

Perhaps there are those—men capable of nothing else but criticism—who will venture to rebuke me because I have chosen to challenge you to the task of leading the expedition against the barbarians and of taking Hellas under your care, while I have passed over my own city. Well, if I were trying to present this matter to any others before having broached it to my own country, which has thrice freed Hellas—twice from the barbarians and once from the Lacedaemonian yoke—I should confess my error. In truth, however, it will be found that I turned to Athens first of all and endeavored to win her over to this cause with all the earnestness of which my nature is capable, but when I perceived that she cared less for what I said than for the ravings of the platform orators, I gave her up, although I did not abandon my efforts. Wherefore I might justly be praised on every hand, because throughout my whole life I have constantly employed such powers as I possess in warring on the barbarians, in condemning those who opposed my plan, and in striving to arouse to action whoever I think will best be able to benefit the Hellenes in any way or to rob the barbarians of their present prosperity. Consequently, I am now addressing myself to you, although I am not unaware that when I am proposing this course many will look at it askance, but that when you are actually carrying it out all will rejoice in it; for no one has had any part in what I have proposed, but when the benefits from it shall have been realized in fact, everyone without fail will look to have his portion.

Consider also what a disgrace it is to sit idly by and see Asia flourishing more than Europe and the barbarians enjoying a greater prosperity than the Hellenes; and, what is more, to see those who derive their power from Cyrus, who as a child was cast out by his mother on the public highway, addressed by the title of "The Great King," while the descendants of Heracles, who because of his virtue was exalted by his father to the rank of a god, are addressed by meaner titles than they. We must not allow this state

of affairs to go on; no, we must change and reverse it entirely. ...

PLUTARCH

The Murder of Philip II

Plutarch, Alexander 9-10.

9) While Philip went on his expedition against the Byzantines, he left Alexander, then sixteen years old, his lieutenant in Macedonia, committing the charge of his seal to him; who, not to sit idle, reduced the rebellious Maedi, and having taken their chief town by storm, drove out the barbarous inhabitants, and planting a colony of several nations in their room, called the place after his own name, Alexandropolis. At the battle of Chaeronea, which his father fought against the Grecians, he is said to have been the first man that charged the Thebans' sacred band. And even in my remembrance, there stood an old oak near the river Cephisus, which people called Alexander's oak, because his tent was pitched under it. And not far off are to be seen the graves of the Macedonians who fell in that battle. This early bravery made Philip so fond of him, that nothing pleased him more than to hear his subjects call himself their general and Alexander their king.

But the disorders of his family, chiefly caused by his new marriages and attachments (the troubles that began in the women's chambers spreading, so to say, to the whole kingdom), raised various complaints and differences between them, which the violence of Olympias, a woman of a jealous and implacable temper, made wider, by exasperating Alexander against his father. Among the rest, this accident contributed most to their falling out. At the wedding of Cleopatra, whom Philip fell in love with and married, she being much too young for him, her uncle Attalus in his drink desired the Macedonians would implore the gods to give them a lawful successor to the kingdom by his niece. This so irritated Alexander, that throwing one of the cups at his head, "You villain," said he, "what, am I then a bastard?" Then Philip, taking Attalus's part, rose up and would have run his son through; but by good fortune for them both, either his over-hasty rage, or the wine he had drunk, made his foot slip, so that he fell down on the floor. At which Alexander reproachfully insulted over him: "See there," said he, "the man who makes preparations to pass out of Europe into Asia, overturned in passing from one seat to another." After this debauch, he and his mother Olympias withdrew

from Philip's company, and when he had placed her in Epirus, he himself retired into Illyria.

About this time, Demaratus the Corinthian, an old friend of the family, who had the freedom to say anything among them without offence, coming to visit Philip, after the first compliments and embraces were over, Philip asked him whether the Grecians were at amity with one another. "It ill becomes you," replied Demaratus, "to be so solicitous about Greece, when you have involved your own house in so many dissensions and calamities." He was so convinced by this seasonable reproach, that he immediately sent for his son home, and by Demaratus's mediation prevailed with him to return.

10) But this reconciliation lasted not long; for when Pixodorus, viceroy of Caria, sent Aristocritus to treat for a match between his eldest daughter and Philip's son, Arrhidaeus, hoping by this alliance to secure his assistance upon occasion, Alexander's mother, and some who pretended to be his friends, presently filled his head with tales and calumnies, as if Philip, by a splendid marriage and important alliance, were preparing the way for settling the kingdom upon Arrhidaeus. In alarm at this, he despatched Thessalus, the tragic actor, into Caria, to dispose Pixodorus to slight Arrhidaeus, both illegitimate and a fool, and rather to accept of himself for his son-in-law. This proposition was much more agreeable to Pixodorus than the former. But Philip, as soon as he was made acquainted with this transaction, went to his son's apartment, taking with him Philotas, the son of Parmenio, one of Alexander's intimate friends and companions, and there reproved him severely, and reproached him bitterly, that he should be so degenerate, and unworthy of the power he was to leave him, as to desire the alliance of a mean Carian, who was at best but the slave of a barbarous prince. Nor did this satisfy his resentment, for he wrote to the Corinthians to send Thessalus to him in chains, and banished Harpalus, Nearchus, Erigyus, and Ptolemy, his son's friends and favourites, whom Alexander afterwards recalled and raised to great honour and preferment.

Not long after this, Pausanias, having had an outrage done to him at the instance of Attalus and Cleopatra, when he found he could get no reparation for his disgrace at Philip's hands, watched his opportunity and murdered him. The guilt of which fact was laid for the most part upon Olympias, who was said to have encouraged and exasperated the enraged youth to revenge; and some sort of suspicion attached even to Alexander himself, who, it was said, when Pausanias came and complained to him of the injury he had received, repeated the verse out of Euripides's Medea—"On husband, and on father, and

on bride.” However, he took care to find out and punish the accomplices of the conspiracy severely, and was very angry with Olympias for treating Cleopatra inhumanly in his absence.

PLUTARCH

On Alexander*

These are some of the famous stories about Alexander related in Plutarch's biography.

When Philonius, the Thessalian, offered the horse named Bucephalus in sale to Philip [Alexander's father], at the price of thirteen talents, the king, with the prince and many others, went into the field to see some trial made of him. The horse appeared extremely vicious and unmanageable, and was so far from suffering himself to be mounted, that he would not bear to be spoken to, but turned fiercely on all the grooms. Philip was displeased at their bringing him so wild and ungovernable a horse, and bade them take him away. But Alexander, who had observed him well, said, "What a horse they are losing, for want of skill and spirit to manage him!" Philip at first took no notice of this, but, upon the prince's often repeating the same expression, and showing great uneasiness, said, "Young man, you find fault with your elders, as if you knew more than they, or could manage the horse better." "And I certainly could," answered the prince. "If you should not be able to ride him, what forfeiture will you submit to for your rashness?" "I will pay the price of the horse."

Upon this all the company laughed, but the king and prince agreeing as to the forfeiture, Alexander ran to the horse, and laying hold on the bridle, turned him to the sun; for he had observed that the shadow which fell before the horse, and moved as he moved, greatly disturbed him. While his fierceness and fury abated, he kept speaking to him softly and stroking him; after which he gently let fall his mantle, leaped lightly upon his back, and got his seat very safe. Then, without pulling the reins too hard, or using either whip or spur, he set him a-going. As soon as he perceived his uneasiness abated, and that he wanted only to run, he put him in a full gallop, and pushed him on both with the voice and spur.

Philip and all his court were in great distress for him at first, and a profound silence took place. But when the prince had turned him and brought him straight back, they all received him with loud

acclamations, except his father, who wept for joy, and kissing him, said, "Seek another kingdom, my son, that may be worthy of thy abilities; for Macedonia is too small for thee..."

[Philip] sent for Aristotle, the most celebrated and learned of all the philosophers; and the reward he gave him for forming his son Alexander was not only honorable, but remarkable for its propriety. He had formerly dismantled the city of Stagira, where that philosopher was born, and now he re-built it, and reestablished the inhabitants, who had either fled or been reduced to slavery... Aristotle was the man Alexander admired in his younger years, and, as he said himself, he had no less affection for him than for his own father...

[Alexander] was only twenty years old when he succeeded to the crown, and he found the kingdom torn into pieces by dangerous parties and implacable animosities. The barbarous nations, even those that bordered upon Macedonia, could not brook subjection, and they longed for their natural kings... Alexander was of opinion, that the only way to security, and a thorough establishment of his affairs, was to proceed with spirit and magnanimity. For he was persuaded, that if he appeared to abate of his dignity in the least article, he would be universally insulted. He therefore quieted the commotions, and put a stop to the rising wars among the barbarians, by marching with the utmost expediency as far as the Danube, where he fought a great battle...

The barbarians, we are told, lost in this battle twenty thousand foot and two thousand five hundred horse, whereas Alexander had no more than thirty-four men killed, nine of which were the infantry. To do honor to their memory, he erected a statue to each of them in brass, the workmanship of Lysippus. And that the Greeks might have their share in the glory of the day, he sent them presents out of the spoil: to the Athenians in particular he sent three hundred bucklers. Upon the rest of the spoils he put this pompous inscription,

Won by Alexander the son of Philip, and the Greeks (excepting the Lacedaemonians), of the barbarians in Asia.

The greatest part of the plate, the purple furniture, and other things of that kind which he took from the Persians, he sent to his mother.

* From: John and William Langhorne, eds., *Plutarch's Lives*, Cincinnati: Applegate, Pounsford, 1874, pp. 434-439.

Speech of Alexander the Great

From Arrian's *The Campaigns of Alexander* (ca. 138).

I observe, gentlemen, that when I would lead you on a new venture you no longer follow me with your old spirit. I have asked you to meet me that we may come to a decision together: are we, upon my advice, to go forward, or, upon yours, to turn back?

If you have any complaint to make about the results of your efforts hitherto, or about myself as your commander, there is no more to say. But let me remind you: through your courage and endurance you have gained possession of Ionia, the Hellespont, both Phrygias, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, Lydia, Caria, Lycia, Pamphylia, Phoenicia, and Egypt; the Greek part of Libya is now yours, together with much of Arabia, lowland Syria, Mesopotamia, Babylon, and Susia; Persia and Media with all the territories either formerly controlled by them or not are in your hands; you have made yourselves masters of the lands beyond the Caspian Gates, beyond the Caucasus, beyond the Tanais, of Bactria, Hyrcania, and the Hyrcanian sea; we have driven the Scythians back into the desert; and Indus and Hydaspes, Acesines and Hydraotes flow now through country which is ours. With all that accomplished, why do you hesitate to extend the power of Macedon—your power—to the Hyphasis and the tribes on the other side? Are you afraid that a few natives who may still be left will offer opposition? Come, come! These natives either surrender without a blow or are caught on the run—or leave their country undefended for your taking; and when we take it, we make a present of it to those who have joined us of their own free will and fight on our side.

For a man who is a man, work, in my belief, if it is directed to noble ends, has no object beyond itself; none the less, if any of you wish to know what limit may be set to this particular campaign, let me tell you that the area of country still ahead of us, from here to the Ganges and the Eastern ocean, is comparatively small. You will undoubtedly find that this ocean is connected with the Hyrcanian Sea, for the great Stream of Ocean encircles the earth. Moreover I shall prove to you, my friends, that the Indian and Persian Gulfs and the Hyrcanian Sea are all three connected and continuous. Our ships will sail round from the Persian Gulf to Libya as far as the Pillars of Hercules, whence all Libya to the eastward will soon be ours, and all Asia too, and to this empire there will be no boundaries but what God Himself has made for the whole world.

But if you turn back now, there will remain unconquered many warlike peoples between the Hyphasis and the Eastern Ocean, and many more to the northward and the Hyrcanian Sea, with the Scythians, too, not far away; so that if we withdraw now there is a danger that the territory which we do not yet securely hold may be stirred to revolt by some nation or other we have not yet forced into submission. Should that happen, all that we have done and suffered will have proved fruitless—or we shall be faced with the task of doing it over again from the beginning. Gentlemen of Macedon, and you, my friends and allies, this must not be. Stand firm; for well you know that hardship and danger are the price of glory, and that sweet is the savour of a life of courage and of deathless renown beyond the grave.

Are you not aware that if Heracles, my ancestor, had gone no further than Tiryns or Argos—or even than the Peloponnese or Thebes—he could never have won the glory which changed him from a man into a god, actual or apparent? Even Dionysus, who is a god indeed, in a sense beyond what is applicable to Heracles, faced not a few laborious tasks; yet we have done more: we have passed beyond Nysa and we have taken the rock of Aornos which Heracles himself could not take. Come, then; add the rest of Asia to what you already possess—a small addition to the great sum of your conquests. What great or noble work could we ourselves have achieved had we thought it enough, living at ease in Macedon, merely to guard our homes, accepting no burden beyond checking the encroachment of the Thracians on our borders, or the Illyrians and Triballians, or perhaps such Greeks as might prove a menace to our comfort?

I could not have blamed you for being the first to lose heart if I, your commander, had not shared in your exhausting marches and your perilous campaigns; it would have been natural enough if you had done all the work merely for others to reap the reward. But it is not so. You and I, gentlemen, have shared the labour and shared the danger, and the rewards are for us all. The conquered territory belongs to you; from your ranks the governors of it are chosen; already the greater part of its treasure passes into your hands, and when all Asia is overrun, then indeed I will go further than the mere satisfaction of our ambitions: the utmost hopes of riches or power which each one of you cherishes will be far surpassed, and whoever wishes to return home will be allowed to go, either with me or without me. I will make those who stay the envy of those who return.

The Procession of Ptolemy II*

When Ptolemy II Philadelphus became king of Egypt (285 B.C.), he celebrated his accession by a magnificent procession and festival at Alexandria. The following is only a part of the description of the very elaborate spectacle, from a history written ca. 200 CE.

First I will describe the tent prepared inside the citadel, apart from the place provided to receive the soldiers, artisans, and foreigners. For it was wonderfully beautiful, and worth talking of. Its size was such that it could accommodate one hundred and thirty couches [for banqueters] arranged in a circle. The roof was upborne on wooden pillars fifty cubits high of which four were arranged to look like palm trees. On the outside of the pillars ran a portico, adorned with a peristyle on three sides with a vaulted roof. Here it was the feasters could sit down. The interior of this was surrounded with scarlet curtains; in the middle of the space, however, were suspended strange hides of beasts, strange both for their variegated color, and their remarkable size. The part which surrounded this portico in the open air was shaded by myrtle trees and laurels, and other suitable shrubs.

As for the whole floor, it was strewed with every kind of flower; for Egypt, thanks to its mild climate, and the fondness of its people for gardening, produces abundantly, and all the year round, those flowers which are scarce in other lands, and then come only at special seasons. Roses, white lilies, and many another flower never lack in that country. Wherefore, although this entertainment took place in midwinter, there was a show of flowers that was quite incredible to the foreigners. For flowers of which one could not easily have found enough to make one chaplet in any other city, were here in vast abundance, to make chaplets for the guests ... and were thickly strewn over the whole floor of the tent; so as really to give the appearance of a most divine meadow.

By the posts around the tent were placed animals carved in marble by the first artists, a full hundred in number; while in the spaces between the posts were hung pictures by the Sicynian painters. And alternately with these were carefully selected images of every kind, and garments embroidered with gold

and splendid cloaks, some having portraits of the kings of Egypt wrought upon them, and some stories from mythology. Above these were placed gold and silver shields alternately.

[A long account follows of the golden couches, golden tripods, silver dishes, and lavers, jewel-set cups, etc., provided for the guests.]

And now to go on to the shows and processions exhibited; for they passed through the Stadium of the city. First of all there went the procession of Lucifer [=the planet Venus] for the fête began at the time when that star first appears. Then came processions in honor of the several gods. In the Dionysus procession, first of all went the Sileni to keep off the multitude, some clad in purple cloaks, and some in scarlet ones. These were followed by Satyrs, bearing gilded lamps made of ivy wood. After them came images of Victory, having golden wings, and they bore in their hands incense burners, six cubits in height, adorned with branches made of ivy wood and gold, and clad in tunics embroidered with figures of animals, and they themselves also had a deal of gold ornament about them. After them followed an altar six cubits high, a double altar, all covered with gilded ivy leaves, having a crown of vine leaves upon it all in gold. Next came boys in purple tunics, bearing frankincense and myrrh, and saffron on golden dishes. And then advanced forty Satyrs, crowned with golden ivy garlands; their bodies were painted some with purple, some with vermilion, and some with other colors. They wore each a golden crown, made to imitate vine leaves and ivy leaves. Presently also came Philiscus the Poet, who was a priest of Dionysus, and with him all the artisans employed in the service of that god; and following were the Delphian tripods as prizes to the trainers of the athletes, one for the trainer of the youths, nine cubits high, the other for the trainer of the men, twelve cubits.

The next was a four-wheeled wagon fourteen cubits high and eight cubits wide; it was drawn by one hundred and eighty men. On it was an image of Dionysus—ten cubits high. He was pouring libations from a golden goblet, and had a purple tunic reaching to his feet...In front of him lay a Lacedaemonian goblet of gold, holding fifteen measures of wine, and a golden tripod, in which was a golden incense burner, and two golden bowls full of cassia and saffron; and a shade covered it round adorned with ivy and vine leaves, and all other kinds of greenery. To it were fastened chaplets and fillets, and ivy wands, drums, turbans, and actors' masks. After many other wagons came one twenty-five cubits long, and fifteen broad; and this was drawn by six hundred men. On this wagon was a sack, holding three thousand measures of wine, and consisting of leopards' skins sewn

* History, Book V, Chap. 25. From: William Stearns Davis, Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources, 2 Vols., (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1912-1913), Vol. I: Greece and the East, pp. 329-332. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

together. This sack allowed its liquor to escape, and it gradually flowed over the whole road.

[An endless array of similar wonders followed; also a vast number of palace servants displaying the golden vessels of the king; twenty-four chariots drawn by four elephants each; the royal menagerie—twelve chariots drawn by antelopes, fifteen by buffaloes, eight by pairs of ostriches, eight by zebras; also many mules, camels, etc., and twenty-four lions.]

After these came a procession of troops—both horsemen and footmen, all superbly armed and appointed. There were 57,600 infantry, and 23,200 cavalry. All these marched in the procession...all in their appointed armor...

The cost of this great occasion was 2239 talents and 50 minae.

POLYBIUS

The Destruction of Corinth*

The Romans sacked Corinth in 146 BCE, during the Rome's war with the Achaean League, nearly simultaneously with the final annihilation of their western rival, Carthage, the same year. Polybius was with the Roman army at Carthage, but he returned to his native Greece not long after to help the Corinthian populace. His Histories were written some time before his death in ca. 118 BCE.

My thirty-eighth book embraces the consummation of the misfortunes of Greece. For though Greece as a whole, as well as separate parts of it, has on several occasions sustained grave disasters, yet to none of her previous defeats could the word "misfortune" be more properly applied, than to those which have befallen her in our time. For it is not only that the sufferings of Greece excite compassion: stronger still is the conviction, which a knowledge of the truth of the several occurrences must bring, that in all she undertook she was supremely unfortunate. At any rate, though the disaster of Carthage is looked upon as of the severest kind, yet one cannot but regard that of Greece as not less, and in some respects even more so. For the Carthaginians at any rate left something for posterity to say on their behalf; but the mistakes of the Greeks were so glaring that they made it impossible for those who wished to support them to

do so. Besides, the destruction of the Carthaginians was immediate and total, so that they had no feeling afterwards of their disasters: but the Greeks, with their misfortunes ever before their eyes, handed down to their children's children the loss of all that once was theirs. And in proportion as we regard those who live in pain as more pitiable than those who lose their lives at the moment of their misfortunes, in that proportion must the disasters of the Greeks be regarded as more pitiable than those of the Carthaginians—unless a man thinks nothing of dignity and honor, and gives his opinion from a regard only to material advantage. To prove the truth of what I say, one has only to remember and compare the misfortunes in Greece reputed to be the heaviest with what I have just now mentioned. ...

Critolaus the Achaean Strategos being dead, and the law providing that, in case of such an event befalling the existing Strategos, the Strategos of the previous year should succeed to the office until the regular congress of the league should meet, it fell to Diaeus to conduct the business of the League and take the head of affairs. Accordingly, after sending forward some troops to Megara, he went himself to Argos; and from that place sent a circular letter to all the towns ordering them to set free their slaves who were of military age, and who had been born and brought up in their houses, and send them furnished with arms to Corinth. He assigned the numbers to be furnished by the several towns quite at random and without any regard to equality, just as he did everything else. Those who had not the requisite number of home-bred slaves were to fill up the quota imposed on each town from other slaves. But seeing that the public poverty was very great, owing to the war with the Lacedaemonians, he compelled the richer classes, men and women alike, to make promises of money and furnish separate contributions. At the same time he ordered a levy en masse at Corinth of all men of military age. The result of these measures was that every city was full of confusion, commotion, and despair: they deemed those fortunate who had already perished in the war, and pitied those who were now starting to take part in it; and everybody was in tears as though they foresaw only too well what was going to happen. They were especially annoyed at the insolent demeanor and neglect of their duties on the part of the slaves—airs which they assumed as having been recently liberated, or, in the cause of others, because they were excited by the prospect of freedom. Moreover, the men were compelled to make their contribution contrary to their own views, according to the property they were reputed to possess; while the women had to do so, by taking the ornaments of their own persons or of their children, to what seemed deliberately meant for their destruction.

* The Histories, Book XXXVIII, Chapters 3-11; Book XXXIX, Chapters 7-17. From: Polybius, *The Histories of Polybius*, 2 Vols., trans. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (London: Macmillan, 1889), II.515-525, 530-540. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

As these measures came all at once, the dismay caused by the hardship of each individually prevented people from attending to or grasping the general question; or they must have foreseen that they were all being led on to secure the certain destruction of their wives and children. But, as though caught in the rush of some winter torrent and carried on by its irresistible violence, they followed the infatuation and madness of their leader. The Eleians and Messenians indeed did not stir, in terror of the Roman fleet; for nothing could have saved them if the storm had burst when it was originally intended. The people of Patrae, and of the towns which were leagued with it, had a short time before suffered disasters in Phocis [in the battle with Metellus at Scarphea]; and their case was much the most pitiable one of all the Peloponnesian cities: for some of them sought a voluntary death; others fled from their towns through deserted parts of the country, with no definite aim in their wanderings, from the panic prevailing in the towns. Some arrested and delivered each other to the enemy, as having been hostile to Rome; others hurried to give information and bring accusations, although no one asked for any such service as yet; while others went to meet the Romans with suppliant branches, confessing their treason, and asking what penance they were to pay, although as yet no one was asking for any account of such things. The whole country seemed to be under an evil spell: everywhere people were throwing themselves down wells or over precipices; and so dreadful was the state of things, that as the proverb has it "even an enemy would have pitied" the disaster of Greece. For in times past the Greeks had met with reverses or indeed complete disaster, either from internal dissensions or from treacherous attacks of despots; but in the present instance it was from the folly of their leaders and their own lack of wisdom that they experienced the grievous misfortunes which befell them. The Thebans also, abandoning their city en masse, left it entirely empty; and among the rest Pytheas retired to the Peloponnese, with his wife and children, and there wandered about the country.

He came upon the enemy much to his surprise. But to my mind the proverb, "the reckonings of the foolish are foolishness" applies to him. And naturally to such men things clear as day come as a surprise... . He was even forming plans for getting back home, acting very like a man who, not having learnt to swim and being about to plunge into the sea, should not consider the question of taking the plunge; but, having taken it, should begin to consider how he is to swim to land....

Diaeus having recently come to Corinth after being appointed Strategos by the vote of the people, Andronidas and others came from Caecilius Metellus.

Against these men he spread a report that they were in alliance with the enemy, and gave them up to the mob, who seized on them with great violence and threw them into chains. Philo of Thessaly also came bringing many liberal offers to the Achaeans. And on hearing them, certain of the men of the country attempted to secure their acceptance; among whom was Stratius, now a very old man, who clung to Diaeus's knees and entreated him to yield to the offers of Metellus. But he and his party would not listen to Philo's proposals. For the fact was that they did not believe that the amnesty would embrace them with the rest; and, as they regarded their own advantage and personal security as of the highest importance, they spoke as they did, and directed all their measures on the existing state of affairs to this end: although, as a matter of fact, they failed entirely to secure these objects. For as they understood quite clearly the gravity of what they had done, they could not believe they would obtain any mercy from Rome; and as to enduring nobly whatever should befall on behalf of their country and the safety of the people, that they never once took into consideration; yet that was the course becoming men who cared for glory, and professed to be the leaders of Greece. But, indeed, how or whence was it likely that such a lofty idea should occur to these men? The members of this conclave were Diaeus and Damocritus, who had but recently been recalled from exile owing to the disturbed state of the times, and with them Alcamenes, Theodectes and Archicrates; and of these last I have already stated at length who they were, and have described their character, policy, and manner of life.

Such being the men with whom the decision rested, the determination arrived at was what was to be expected. They not only imprisoned Andronidas and Lagius and their friends, but even the sub-Strategos Sosicrates, on the charge of his having presided at a council and given his voting for sending an embassy to Caecilius Metellus, and in fact of having been the cause of all their misfortunes. Next day they empaneled judges to try them; condemned Sosicrates to death; and having bound him, racked him until he died, without, however, inducing him to say anything that they expected: but they acquitted Lagius, Andronidas and Archippus, partly because the people were scared at the lawless proceeding against Sosicrates, and partly because Diaeus got a talent from Andronidas and forty minae from Archippus; for this man could not relax his usual shameless and abandoned principles in this particular even "in the very pit," as the saying is. He had acted with similar cruelty a short time before also in regard to Philinus of Corinth. For on a charge of his holding communication with Menalcidas and favoring the

Roman cause, he caused Philinus and his sons to be flogged and racked in each other's sight, and did not desist until the boys and Philinus were all dead. When such madness and ferocity was infecting everybody, as it would not be easy to parallel even among barbarians, it would be clearly very natural to ask why the whole nation did not utterly perish.

For my part, I think that Fortune displayed her resources and skill in resisting the folly and madness of the leaders; and, being determined at all hazards to save the Achaeans, like a good wrestler, she had recourse to the only trick left; and that was to bring down and conquer the Greeks quickly, as in fact she did. For it was owing to this that the wrath and fury of the Romans did not blaze out farther; that the army of Libya did not come to Greece; and that these leaders, being such men as I have described, did not have an opportunity, by gaining a victory, of displaying their wickedness upon their countrymen. For what it was likely that they would have done to their own people, if they had got any ground of vantage or obtained any success, may be reasonably inferred from what has already been said. And, indeed, everybody at the time had the proverb on his lips, "had we not perished quickly we had not been saved." ...

Aulus Postumius deserves some special notice from us here. He was a member of a family and gens of the first rank, but in himself was garrulous and wordy, and exceedingly ostentatious. From his boyhood he had a great leaning to Greek studies and literature: but he was so immoderate and affected in this pursuit, that owing to him the Greek style became offensive to the elder and most respectable men at Rome. Finally, he attempted to write a poem and a formal history in Greek, in the preface to which he desired his readers to excuse him if, being a Roman, he could not completely command the Greek idiom or method in the handling of the subject. To whom M. Porcius Cato made a very pertinent answer. "I wonder," said he, "on what grounds you make such a demand. If the Amphictyonic council had charged you to write the history, you might perhaps have been forced to allege this excuse and ask for this consideration. But to write it of your own accord, when there was no compulsion to do so, and then to demand consideration, if you should happen to write bad Greek, is quite unreasonable. It is something like a man entering for the boxing match or pancratium in the public games, and, when he comes into the stadium, and it is his turn to fight, begging the spectators to pardon him if he is unable to stand the fatigue or the blows.' Such a man of course would be laughed at and condemned at once." And this is what such historiographers should experience, to prevent

them spoiling a good thing by their rash presumption. Similarly, in the rest of his life, he had imitated all the worst points in Greek fashions; for he was fond of pleasure and averse from toil. And this may be illustrated from his conduct in the present campaign: for being among the first to enter Greece at the time that the battle in Phocis took place, he retired to Thebes on the pretense of illness, in order to avoid taking part in the engagement; but, when the battle was ended, he was the first to write to the Senate announcing the victory, entering into every detail as though he had himself been present at the conflict....

The incidents of the capture of Corinth were melancholy. The soldiers cared nothing for the works of art and the consecrated statues. I saw with my own eyes pictures thrown on the ground and soldiers playing dice on them; among them was a picture of Dionysus by Aristides—in reference to which they say that the proverbial saying arose, "Nothing to the Dionysus,"—and the Hercules tortured by the shirt of Deianeira....

Owing to the popular reverence for the memory of Philopoemen, they did not take down the statues of him in the various cities. So true is it, as it seems to me, that every genuine act of virtue produces in the mind of those who benefit by it an affection which it is difficult to efface... . One might fairly, therefore, use the common saying: "He has been foiled not at the door, but in the road."... There were many statues of Philopoemen, and many erections in his honor, voted by the several cities; and a Roman at the time of the disaster which befell Greece at Corinth, wished to abolish them all and to formally indict him, laying an information against him, as though he were still alive, as an enemy and ill-wisher to Rome. But after a discussion, in which Polybius spoke against this sycophant, neither Mummius nor the commissioners would consent to abolish the honors of an illustrious man... . Polybius, in an elaborate speech, conceived in the spirit of what has just been said, maintained the cause of Philopoemen. His arguments were that "This man had indeed been frequently at variance with the Romans on the matter of their injunctions, but he only maintained his opposition so far as to inform and persuade them on the points in dispute; and even that he did not do without serious cause. He gave a genuine proof of his loyal policy and gratitude, by a test as it were of fire, in the periods of the wars with Philip and Antiochus. For, possessing at those times the greatest influence of any one in Greece, from his personal power as well as that of the Achaeans, he preserved his friendship for Rome with the most absolute fidelity, having joined in the vote of the Achaeans in virtue of which, four months before the Romans crossed from Italy, they levied a war from

their own territory upon Antiochus and the Aetolians, when nearly all the other Greeks had become estranged from the Roman friendship." Having listened to this speech and approved of the speaker's view, the ten commissioners granted that the complimentary erections to Philopoemen in the several cities should be allowed to remain. Acting on this pretext, Polybius begged of the Consul the statues of Achaëus, Aratus, and Philopoemen, though they had already been transported to Acarnania from the Peloponnese: in gratitude for which action people set up a marble statue of Polybius himself ...

After the settlement made by the ten commissioners in Achaia, they directed the Quaestor, who was to superintend the selling of Dicaeus's property, to allow Polybius to select anything he chose from the goods and present it to him as a free gift, and to sell the rest to the highest bidders. But, so far from accepting any such present, Polybius urged his friends not to covet anything whatever of the goods sold by the Quaestor anywhere:—for he was going a round of the cities and selling the property of all those who had been partisans of Dicaeus, as well of such as had been condemned except those who left children or parents. Some of these friends did not take his advice; but those who did follow it earned a most excellent reputation among their fellow-citizens.

After completing these arrangements in six months, the ten commissioners sailed for Italy, at the beginning of spring, having left a noble monument of Roman policy for the contemplation of all Greece. They also charged Polybius, as they were departing, to visit all the cities and to decide all questions that might arise, until such plain time as they were grown accustomed to their constitution and laws. Which he did: and after a while caused the inhabitants to be contented with the constitution given them by the commissioners, and left no difficulty connected with the laws on any point, private or public, unsettled.

The Roman Proconsul, after the commissioners had left Achaia, having restored the holy places in the Isthmus and ornamented the temples in Olympia and Delphi, proceeded to make a tour of the cities, receiving marks of honor and proper gratitude in each. And indeed he deserved honor both public and private, for he conducted himself with self-restraint and disinterestedness, and administered his office with mildness, although he had great opportunities of enriching himself, and immense authority in Greece. And, in fact, in the points in which he was thought to have at all overlooked justice, he appears not to have done it for his own sake, but for that of his friends. And the most conspicuous instance of this was in the case of the Chalcidian horsemen whom he put to death... .