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The archaic anti-citizen: poverty, destitution, and land in archaic Sparta

A. Beggars in epic and elegy

1. Tyrtaios fr. 10 W² *ap. Lyc. Leok.* 107, see Faraone 2006 for structure.

τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν περὶ ἧὶ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον·
τὴν δ' αὐτοῦ προλιπόντα πόλιν καὶ πίονας ἀγροὺς
πτωχεύειν πάντων ἔστ' ἀνηρότατον,
πλαζόμενον σὺν μητρὶ φίλῃ καὶ πατρὶ γέροντι 5
παισὶ τε σὺν μικροῖς κουριδίῃ τ' ἀλόχοι.
ἐχθρὸς μὲν γὰρ τοῖσι μετέσσειται οὐς κεν ἴκηται,
χρησιμοσύνη τ' εἴκων καὶ στυγερῆ πενίη,
αἰσχύνει τε γένος, κατὰ δ' ἀγλαὸν εἶδος ἐλέγχει,
πᾶσα δ' ἀτιμὴ καὶ κακότης ἔπεται. 10

†εἶθ' οὕτως **ἀνδρός** τοι **ἄλωμένου οὐδεμί' ὄρη**
γίνεται οὐτ' αἰδῶς οὐτ' ὀπίσω γένεος.
θυμῶι γῆς πέρι τῆσδε μαχώμεθα καὶ περὶ παίδων
θνήσκωμεν ψυχῶν μηκέτι φειδόμενοι.
ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες, 15
μηδὲ **φυγῆς αἰσχροῦς** ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου,
ἀλλὰ μέγαν ποιεῖτε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἐν φρεσὶ θυμόν,
μηδὲ φιλοψυχεῖτ' ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενοι·
τοὺς δὲ παλαιότερους, ὧν οὐκέτι γούνατ' ἐλαφρά,
μη καταλείποντες φεύγετε, τοὺς γεραιούς. 20

αἰσchrὸν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο, μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
κεῖσθαι πρόσθε νέων ἄνδρα παλαιότερον,
ἤδη λευκὸν ἔχοντα κάρη πολιόν τε γένειον,
θυμὸν ἀποπνεῖοντ' ἄλκιμον ἐν κονίῃ,
αἵματόεντ' αἰδοῖα φίλαις ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντα— 25
αἰσchrὰ τά γ' ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νεμεσητὸν ἰδεῖν,
καὶ χρῶα γυμνωθέντα· νέοισι δὲ πάντ' ἐπέοικεν,
ὄφρ' ἐρατῆς ἥβης ἀγλαὸν ἄνθος ἔχη,
ἀνδράσι μὲν θηητὸς ἰδεῖν, ἐρατὸς δὲ γυναιξὶ
ζωὸς ἐὼν, καλὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών. 30

ἀλλὰ τις εὖ διαβὰς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισι
στηριχθεὶς ἐπὶ γῆς, χεῖλος ὁδοῦσι δακῶν.

It is a beautiful thing for a young man to die suffering in the front-ranks, fighting on behalf of one's country (*patris*), but whereas **to be destitute**, having abandoned his *polis* and rich farmlands, is the worst thing of all, **causing him to wander around** with his beloved mother and

aged father, as well as his small children and wedded wife. For he would be **an enemy** to anyone he meets, **an image of want and hateful poverty**, he shames his *genos* ('ancestors, descendants?'), and is a disgrace according to his splendid form, and every dishonour and misery follows him. There is thus **no care for a wanderer**, nor is there respect or posterity hereafter. Let us fight bravely for this land and die for our children no longer sparing our lives. Young men, fight as you remain alongside one another, and do not begin shameful fleeing or fear, but make your spirit great and brave in your heart, do not be faint-hearted in fighting with men. And the older men, whose knees are no longer nimble, do not flee leaving them behind, those who are old. For this indeed is a **shameful thing**, for after having fought in the front-ranks, there is an older man lying before the young, having already white hair and a grey beard, expelling his brave spirit in the dust, holding in his own hands his bloody genitals, for **these are shameful for the eyes** and is an indignant thing to see, and his body naked. All these things seem to be for young men, while he has the splendid flower of lovely youth, to be beheld by men, and beloved by women in life, and beautiful having fallen in the front-ranks. But let each man stand firmly with both feet fixed on the ground, biting his lip with his teeth.

2. Theognis, *II*. 383-92

τοὶ δ' ἀπὸ δειλῶν
ἔργων ἴσχοντες θυμὸν ὅμως **πενίην**
μητέρ' ἀμηχανίης ἔλαβον τὰ δίκαια φιλεῦντες, 385
ἥτ' ἀνδρῶν παράγει θυμὸν ἐς ἀμπλακίην
βλάπτουσ' ἐν στήθεσσι φρένας κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης·
τολμᾷ δ' οὐκ ἐθέλων **αἴσχατα πολλὰ** φέρειν
χρημοσύνη **εἴκων**, ἥ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ διδάσκει,
ψεύδεά τ' ἐξαπάτας τ' οὐλομένας τ' ἔριδας, 390
ἄνδρα καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλοντα· **κακὸν δέ οἱ οὐδὲν ἔοικεν**·
ἥ γὰρ καὶ χαλεπὴν τίκτει ἀμηχανίην.

... whilst those who refrain from dreadful deeds **are in poverty, the mother of want**, and in spite of taking justice into their hearts, **poverty leads men's hearts into error**, hindering their minds under the force of necessity. A man thus dares to bear many **shameful things** unwillingly, **an image of want**, which is the teacher of many dreadful things, such as lies, deceptions, curses, and strives, despite the fact he is unwilling. Therefore, **there is nothing worse than need**, for it gives birth to difficult helplessness.

3. Hesiod, *Er*. 635-38, *cf. H.H.Dem.*, *I*. 147; Mimnermos fr. 2 W², *II*. 11-16.

ὅς ποτε καὶ τεῖδ' ἦλθε πολὺν διὰ πόντον ἀνύσσας,
Κύμην Αἰολίδα προλιπὼν ἐν νηὶ μελαίνῃ,
οὐκ ἄφενος φεύγων οὐδὲ πλοῦτόν τε καὶ ὄλβον,
ἀλλὰ **κακὴν πενίην, τὴν Ζεὺς ἀνδρεσσι δίδωσιν**.

'He one day came to this place having crossed the great sea, having left Aeolian Kyme on a black ship, not fleeing a wealth of riches and abundance, but **hateful poverty, which Zeus gives to men.**'

4. *Odyssey* 6, ll. 208-9

πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσιν ἅπαντες
ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε, δόσις δ' ὀλίγη τε φίλη τε

For all foreigners and beggars are under the protection of Zeus, and even a small gift is welcome.

5. Hesiod, *Er.* 355

δώτη μὲν τις ἔδωκεν, ἀδώτη δ' οὐ τις ἔδωκεν.

Someone gives to the giver, but no one gives to the non-giver.

6. Theognis, ll. 274-78

παῖδας ἐπεὶ θρέψαιο καὶ ἄρμενα πάντα παράσχοις,
χρήματα δ' ἐγκαταθήης πόλλ' ἀνηρὰ παθῶν, 275
τὸν πατέρ' ἔχθαίρουσι, καταρῶνται δ' ἀπολέσθαι
καὶ στυγέουσ' ὥσπερ πτωχὸν ἐσερχόμενον.

'When you have raised your children and provided them with everything they need, and you set down your resources having suffered many irritants, **they hate** their father, they pray that he may die and **they are utterly disgusted** as if **a beggar is coming towards them.**'

7. *Odyssey* 18, ll. 1-7

ἦλθε δ' ἐπὶ πτωχὸς πανδήμιος, ὃς κατὰ ἄστυ 1
πτωχεύεσκ' Ἰθάκης, μετὰ δ' ἔπρεπε γαστέρι μάργῃ
ἄζηγες φαγέμεν καὶ πιέμεν· οὐδέ οἱ ἦν ἴς
οὐδέ βίη, εἶδος δὲ μάλα μέγας ἦν ὄρασθαι.
Ἄρναίος δ' ὄνομ' ἔσκε· τὸ γὰρ θέτο πότνια μήτηρ 5
ἐκ γενετῆς· Ἴρον δὲ νέοι κίκλησκον ἅπαντες,
οὔνεκ' ἀπαγγέλλεσκε κιών, ὅτε πού τις ἀνώγοι.

There arrived a **public beggar**, who had come to the city of Ithaka **to go around begging**, for he clearly had a swelling belly owing to his continuous eating and drinking. For he was neither strong nor forceful, but his form was indeed large to look at. His name was Arnaios, for this is the name his **noble mother** gave him from birth, but all the young men called him Iron, because he would always **go around** giving messages, whenever anyone would ask him.

B. Local Laconian echoes: inequality and subjection

1. Tyrtaios fr. 1 W² *ap.* Arist. *Pol.* 1306b37-1307a2.

συνέβη δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἐν Λακεδαίμονι ὑπὸ τὸν Μεσηνιακὸν πόλεμον· δῆλον δὲ [καὶ] τοῦτο ἐκ τῆς Τυρταίου ποιήσεως τῆς καλουμένης Εὐνομίας· θλιβόμενοι γὰρ τινες διὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἤξιουν ἀνάδαστον ποιεῖν τὴν χώραν.

And this [i.e. stasis] also occurred in Lakedaimon during the Messenian War. This is clear from Tyrtaios' poem called *Eunomia*, since some people had been hard-pressed because of the war **demanding a redistribution of the land be made.**

2. Alkaios fr. 360 LP *ap. schol. Pind. Isthm.* 2.17.

ὣς γὰρ δὴ ποτ' Ἀριστόδ-
μον φαῖς' οὐκ ἀπάλαμνον ἐν Σπάρτῃ λόγον
εἶπην· **χρήματ' ἄνηρ**, πένι-
χρος δ' οὐδ' εἷς πέλειτ' ἕσλος οὐδὲ τίμιος.

'For thus when Aristodemos expressed a view which is not reckless at Sparta, that **a man is his property**, and no poor man is fine or honourable.'

3. Diod. Sic. 7.12.6, *cf. Aristotle fr. 544 Rose, et al, see Van Wees 1999, 3-4.*

ἀ φιλοχρηματία Σπάρταν ὀλεῖ, ἄλλο δὲ οὐδέν.

The love of money will destroy Sparta, nothing else.

4. Tyrtaios fr. 7 W² *ap. Paus.* 4.14.5

δεσπότης οἰμώζοντες, ὁμῶς **ἄλογοί τε καὶ αὐτοί**,
εὐτέ τιν' οὐλομένη μοῖρα κίχοι θανάτου.

Wailing for their masters, **both themselves and their wives**, whenever the grim lot of death fell upon one of them.

5. Tyrtaios fr. 5, *Il.* 7-8 W² *ap. Strabo* 6.3.3

εἰκοστῷ δ' οἱ μὲν κατὰ πίονα ἔργα λιπόντες
φεύγον Ἰθωμαίων ἐκ μεγάλων ὀρέων.

But in the twentieth year, once [the Messenians] had abandoned their **rich farmlands**, fled from the high mountains of Ithome.

6. Plutarch, *Lyc.* 28.4

καὶ τὰλλα δὲ τραχέως προσεφέροντο καὶ σκληρῶς αὐτοῖς, ὥστε καὶ πίνειν ἀναγκάζοντες πολὺν ἄκρατον **εἰς τὰ συσσίτια παρεισηγον**, ἐπιδεικνύμενοι τὸ μεθύειν οἷόν ἐστι τοῖς νέοις. καὶ ᾠδὰς ἐκέλευον ἄδειν καὶ χορείας χορεύειν ἀγεννεῖς καὶ καταγελάστους, ἀπέχεσθαι δὲ τῶν ἐλευθέρων.

They would also act harshly and cruelly towards [the helots] in other ways, such as when they would force them to drink large quantities of unmixed wine and then introduce them into the *syssitia*, in order to demonstrate the sort of thing drunkenness was to the young men. They would also order them to sing songs and dance dances which were low-born and ridiculous, but to refrain from those appropriate for free people.

Abbreviations

W² = M.L. West (ed.), *Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1989-1992).

LP = E. Lobel & D.L. Page (eds.), *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta* (Oxford, 1955).

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