

**Historical change in the ancient Aegean:  
A conference in honour of John Kenyon Davies**

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**The Archaic Narrative**

**1. Homer, *Odyssey*, XIV 199–213 and 222–234:**

ἐκ μὲν Κρητᾶων γένος εὖχομαι εὐρειάων,  
ἀνέρος ἀφνειοῦ παίσι: πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι  
υἴεες ἐν μεγάρω ἡμὲν τράφεν ἡδ' ἐγένοντο  
γνήσιοι ἐξ ἀλόχου: ἐμὲ δ' ὠνητὴ τέκε μήτηρ  
παλλακίς, ἀλλὰ με Ἴσον ἰθαιγενέεσσιν ἐτίμα  
Κάστωρ Ὑλακίδης, τοῦ ἐγὼ γένος εὖχομαι εἶναι  
ὅς τὸτ' ἐνὶ Κρήτεσσι θεὸς ὡς τίετο δῆμῳ  
ὄλβῳ τε πλούτῳ τε καὶ υἰάσι κυδαλίμοισιν.  
ἀλλ' ἦ τοι τὸν κῆρες ἔβαν θανάτοιο φέρουσαι  
εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους: τοὶ δὲ ζῶνῃ ἐδύσαντο  
παῖδες ὑπέρθυμοι καὶ ἐπὶ κλήρους ἐβάλοντο,  
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ μάλα παῦρα δόσαν καὶ οἰκί' ἔνειμαν.  
ἡγαγόμεν δὲ γυναῖκα πολυκλήρων ἀνθρώπων  
εἵνεκ' ἐμῆς ἀρετῆς, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιος ἦα  
οὐδὲ φυγοπτόλεμος [...]

[...]  
τοῖος ἔα ἐν πολέμῳ: ἔργον δέ μοι οὐ φίλον ἔσκεν  
οὐδ' οἰκωφελίη, ἢ τε τρέφει ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,  
ἀλλὰ μοι αἰεὶ νῆες ἐπήρετμοι φίλαι ἦσαν  
καὶ πόλεμοι καὶ ἄκοντες εὐξέστοι καὶ οἴστοί,  
λυγρά, τὰ τ' ἄλλοισιν γε καταριγηλὰ πέλονται.  
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ τὰ φίλ' ἔσκε τὰ που θεὸς ἐν φρεσὶ  
θῆκεν:  
ἄλλος γάρ τ' ἄλλοισιν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτέρπεται ἔργοις.  
πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Τροίης ἐπιβήμεναι υἴας Ἀχαιῶν  
εἰνάκις ἀνδράσιν ἦρξα καὶ ὠκυπόροισι νέεσσιν  
ἄνδρας ἐς ἄλλοδαπούς, καὶ μοι μάλα τύγχανε  
πολλά.  
τῶν ἐξαιρέυμην μενοεικέα, πολλὰ δ' ὀπίσω  
λάγχανον: αἴψα δὲ οἶκος ὀφέλλετο, καὶ ῥα  
ἔπειτα  
δεινός τ' αἰδοῖός τε μετὰ Κρήτεσσι τετύγμην.

**I claim my race is from wide Crete.** I'm a rich man's son, and many other sons were also born and bred in his palace, lawful ones by his wife. A bought mother gave birth to me, a concubine, but he honored me as equal to his legitimate sons, did Castor Hylacides, whose stock I claim to be, who was honored as a god then among the Cretans, for the kingdom's happiness and riches, and his gloried sons. But, yes, death's agents came and carried him to the house of Hades. His high-spirited sons divided his estate and cast lots for it, then gave me very little and allotted me a house. I married a woman, of men who had much land, on account of my virtue, since I wasn't unsagacious nor one who fled in war [...]. **Such was I in war, but farmwork was not dear to me,** nor managing a house that raises splendid children, but always dear to me were ships with oars, and wars, and well-polished javelins, and arrows, wretched things, that, for others, make one shudder, but ones a god put in my heart, I guess, ones that were dear to me, for another man delights in other deeds. For before the sons of the Achaeans set foot on Troy, I'd led men and swift-sailing ships nine times against foreign men, and very many things fell to me, from which I picked out many choice ones, and many later came to me by lot. My house soon prospered, and thereafter I became feared and revered among the Cretans (tr. J. Huddleston).

**2. Homer, *Odyssey*, XVIII 366–380:**

Ἐυρύμαχ', εἰ γὰρ νῶϊν ἔρις ἔργοιο γένοιτο  
ᾧρη ἐν εἰαρινῇ, ὅτε τ' ἤματα μακρὰ πέλονται,  
ἐν ποίῃ, δρέπανον μὲν ἐγὼν εὐκαμπὲς ἔχοιμι,  
καὶ δὲ σὺ τοῖον ἔχοις, ἵνα πειρησαίμεθα ἔργου  
νήστιες ἄχρι μάλα κνέφαος, ποίη δὲ παρείη.

εἰ δ' αὖ καὶ βόες εἶεν ἐλαυνέμεν, οἳ περ ἄριστοι,  
 αἴθωνες, μεγάλοι, ἄμφω κεκορηότε ποιῆς,  
 ἤλικες, ἰσοφόροι, τῶν τε σθένος οὐκ ἀλαπαδνόν,  
 τετράγυον δ' εἴη, εἴκοι δ' ὑπὸ βῶλος ἀρότρῳ:  
 τῷ κέ μ' ἴδοις, εἰ ὦλκα διηνεκέα προταμοίμην.  
 εἰ δ' αὖ καὶ πόλεμόν ποθεν ὀρμήσειε Κρονίων  
 σήμερον, αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ σάκος εἴη καὶ δύο δοῦρε  
 καὶ κυνέη πάγχαλκος, ἐπὶ κροτάφοις ἀραρυῖα,  
 τῷ κέ μ' ἴδοις πρῶτοισιν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι μιγέντα,  
 οὐδ' ἄν μοι τὴν γαστέρ' ὄνειδίζων ἀγορεύεις.

**Eurymachus, why, I'd like us to have a work contest**, in the season of spring, when the days are getting long, in grass. I'd have a well-curved scythe, and you'd have one like it, and there'd be grass at hand, so we could test each other's work, fasting till the very twilight. I'd also like there to be oxen to drive, the very best ones, tawny, big ones, both fed full of grass, of the same age and equally able to carry, whose strength is inexhaustible, and that there'd be a four-acre field, and the clods yield to the plow. Then you'd see if I could cut unbroken furrows before me. I'd also like for Cronion to start up a war from somewhere, today, then that I'd have a shield and two spears, and a solid-bronze helmet, fitted to my temples. Then you'd see me mixing in the first of front-line fighters, and you wouldn't speak reproachfully of this belly of mine (tr. J. Huddleston).

### 3. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, ll. 27–35:

ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δὲ ταῦτα τεῶν ἐνικάτθεο θυμῶ,  
 μηδέ σ' Ἔρις κακόχαρτος ἀπ' ἔργου θυμὸν ἐρύκοι  
 νεῖκε' ὀπιπεύοντ' ἀγορῆς ἐπακουὸν ἐόντα.  
 ὦρη γάρ τ' ὀλίγη πέλεται νεικέων τ' ἀγορέων τε,  
 ὧτινι μὴ βίος ἔνδον ἐπηετανὸς κατὰκειται  
 ὠραῖος, τὸν γαῖα φέρει, Δημήτερος ἀκτῆν.  
 τοῦ κε κορεσσάμενος νείκεα καὶ δῆριν ὀφέλλοις  
 κτήμασ' ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίοις: σοὶ δ' οὐκέτι δεύτερον ἔσται  
 ὧδ' ἔρδειν: [...].

Perses, lay up these things in your heart, and do not let that Strife who delights in mischief hold your heart back from work, while you peep and peer and listen to the wrangles of the court-house. [30] Little concern has he with quarrels and courts who has not a year's victuals laid up betimes, even that which the earth bears, Demeter's grain. When you have got plenty of that, you can raise disputes and strive to get another's goods (LCL tr. H. G. Evelyn-White).

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