

Chariot Racing, the *Charis* of Tyranny, and Dynastic Succession in Athens

1. Herodotos, *Histories* 1.60

Μετὰ δὲ οὐ πολλὸν χρόνον
τῶντὸ φρονήσαντες οἱ τε τοῦ Μεγακλέος
στασιῶται καὶ οἱ τοῦ Λυκούργου ἐξελαύνουσι
μιν. Οὕτω μὲν Πεισίστρατος ἔσχε τὸ πρῶτον
Ἀθήνας καὶ τὴν τυραννίδα οὐκ ἄκαρτα
ἐρριζωμένην ἔχων ἀπέβαλε, οἱ δὲ ἐξελάσαντες
Πεισίστρατον αὐτὶς ἐκ νέης ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι
ἐστασίασαν. Περιελαυνόμενος δὲ τῆ στασί ὁ
Μεγακλῆς ἐπεκηρυκεύετο Πεισιστράτῳ, εἰ
βούλοιτό οἱ τὴν θυγατέρα ἔχειν γυναῖκα ἐπὶ τῇ
τυραννίδι. Ἐνδεξαμένον δὲ τὸν λόγον καὶ
ὁμολογήσαντος ἐπὶ τούτοισι Πεισιστράτου,
μηχανῶνται δὴ ἐπὶ τῇ κατόδῳ πρῆγμα
εὐηθέστατον, ὡς ἐγὼ εὐρίσκω, μακρῶ (ἐπεὶ γε
ἀπεκρίθη ἐκ παλαιτέρου τοῦ βαρβάρου ἔθνεος
τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὸν καὶ δεξιώτερον καὶ εὐηθείης
ἡλιθίου ἀπηλλαγμένον μᾶλλον), εἰ καὶ τότε γε
οὔτοι ἐν Ἀθηναίοισι τοῖσι
πρῶτοισι λεγομένοισι εἶναι Ἑλλήνων σοφίην
μηχανῶνται τοιάδε. Ἐν τῷ δήμῳ τῷ Παιανίῳ ἦν
γυνή, τῇ οὖνομα ἦν Φύη, μέγας ἀπὸ τεσσέρων
πήχεων ἀπολείπουσα τρεῖς δακτύλους καὶ ἄλλως
εὐειδής. Ταύτην τὴν γυναῖκα σκευάσαντες
πανοπλίῃ, ἐς ἄρμα ἐσβιβάσαντες καὶ
προδέξαντες σχῆμα οἷόν τι ἔμελλε
εὐπρεπέστατον φανέεσθαι ἔχουσα, ἤλαννον ἐς
τὸ ἄστυ, προδρόμους κήρυκας προπέμψαντες, οἱ
τὰ ἐντεταλμένα ἠγόρευον ἀπικόμενοι ἐς τὸ
ἄστυ, λέγοντες τοιάδε: «ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, δέκεσθε
ἀγαθῷ νόῳ Πεισίστρατον, τὸν αὐτὴ ἡ Ἀθηναίη
τιμήσασα ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα κατάγει ἐς τὴν
ἐσωτῆς ἀκρόπολιν.» Οἱ μὲν δὴ ταῦτα
διαφοιτῶντες ἔλεγον, αὐτίκα δὲ ἔς τε τοὺς
δήμους φάτις ἀπῆκετο ὡς Ἀθηναίη Πεισίστρατον
κατάγει, καὶ <οἱ> ἐν
τῷ ἄστεϊ πειθόμενοι τὴν γυναῖκα εἶναι αὐτὴν τὴν
θεὸν προσεύχοντό τε τὴν ἄνθρωπον καὶ
ἐδέκοντο Πεισίστρατον.

But a short time after this, the faction of Megakles and that of Lykourgos made common cause and drove Peisistratos out. That was how Peisistratos took possession of Athens the *first* time, but since his tyranny had not yet been established firmly he lost it in that way. But now those who had expelled him together were again at feud, and Megakles, being driven to it by the strife of the factions, sent a proposition to Peisistratos: would he want take Megakles' daughter as a wife in exchange for returning to Athens as *tyrannos*? Once Peisistratos accepted his offer and agreed to the condition, between them they devised for his return a matter that was the most foolish, in my opinion, by far, especially since the Greeks were considered more clever and free from silly foolishness than the barbarians since the most ancient times, if indeed these men did devise at that time the following scheme for the Athenians, who were reputed to be the wisest.

There was in the deme of Paiania a beautiful woman by the name of Phye, who was nearly six feet tall and beautiful besides. After they fitted her out in full armor, they put her in the chariot, and after showing her the *schema* in which she would appear the most becoming, they drove to Athens, where messengers who had preceded them were already, according to their instructions, talking to the people and urging them to welcome Peisistratos back, because the goddess Athena herself had shown him extraordinary honor and was bringing him home to her own Acropolis. They spread this nonsense all over the town, and it was not long before the rumor reached the outlying villages that Athena was bringing Peisistratos back, and both villagers and townsfolk, convinced that the woman Phye was indeed the goddess, offered her their prayers and received Peisistratos with open arms.

(trans. Greene, with modifications)

2) Pindar, *Olympian* 1

οἷα παίζομεν φίλαν
 ἄνδρες ἀμφὶ θαμὰ τράπεζαν. ἀλλὰ Δω-
 ρίην ἀπὸ φόρμιγγα πισσάλου
 λάμβαν', εἴ τί τοι Πίσας τε καὶ Φερενίκου χάρις
 νόον ὑπὸ γλυκυτάταις ἔθηκε φροντίσιν,
 20 ὅτε παρ' Ἀλφεῶ σῦτο δέμας
ἀκέντητον ἐν δρόμοισι παρέχων,
κράτει δὲ προσέμειξε δεσπότην,

Συρακόσιον ἵπποχάρ-
μαν βασιλῆα· λάμπει δὲ οἱ κλέος
ἐν εὐάνορι Λυδοῦ Πέλοπος ἀποικία·
 25 τοῦ μεγασθενῆς ἐράσματο Γαιάοχος
Ποσειδάν, ἐπεὶ νιν καθαροῦ λέβη-
τος ἔξελε Κλωθῶ,
ἐλέφαντι φαίδιμον ὦμον κεκαδμένον.
 ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν
 28b φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
 δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις
 ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι.

τοῦνεκα οἱ προῆκαν υἷον ἀθάνατοί (οἱ) πάλιν
 μετὰ τὸ ταχύποτμον αὐτίς ἀνέρων ἔθνος.
πρὸς εὐάνθεμον δ' ὅτε φῦαν
λάχναι νιν μέλαν γένειον ἔρεφον,
ἐτοῖμον ἀνεφρόντισεν γάμον

Πισάτα παρὰ πατρός εὐδοξον Ἴπποδάμειαν
 σχεθέμεν. ἐγγύς δ' ἔλθων πολιᾶς ἀλὸς οἶος ἐν ὄρφυα
 ἄπυεν βαρύκτυπον
 Εὐτρίαιναν· ὁ δ' αὐτῶ
 παρ ποδὶ σχεδὸν φάνη.

τῶ μὲν εἶπε· Φίλια δῶρα Κυπρίας
ἄγ' εἴ τι Ποσειδαον, ἐς χάριν
τέλλεται, πέδασον ἔγχος Οἰνομάου χάλκεον,
ἐμὲ δ' ἐπὶ ταχυτάτων πόρευσον ἀρμάτων
ἐς Ἴλιον, κράτει δὲ πέλασον.
 ἐπεὶ τρεῖς τε καὶ δέκ' ἄνδρας ὀλέσαις
 μναστῆρας ἀναβάλλεται γάμον

θυγατρός. ὁ μέγας δὲ κίνδυνος ἀναλκιν οὐ φῶτα λαμβάνει.
 θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκα, τὰ κέ τις ἀνώνημον
 γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ καθήμενος ἔφοι μάταν,
 ἀπάντων καλῶν ἄμμορος; ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ
 μὲν οὔτος ἄεθλος

ὑποκείσεται· τὴν δὲ πρᾶξιν φίλαν δίδοι.
 ὡς ἔννεπεν· οὐδ' ἀκράντοις ἐφάματο
 ἔπεσι. τὸν μὲν ἀγάλλων θεός
ἔδωκεν δίφρον τε χρύσειον πτεροῖσιν τ' ἀκάμαντας ἵππους.

such as those we men often perform in play
 about the friendly table. Come, take
 the Dorian lyre¹ from its peg,
 if the splendor of Pisa² and of Pherenikos³ has indeed
 enthralled your mind with sweetest considerations,
 when he sped beside the Alpheos,⁴
 giving his limbs unguided in the race,
 and joined to victorious power his master,

20

Syracuse's horse-loving
 king. Fame shines for him
 in the colony of brave men founded by Lydian Pelops⁵
 with whom mighty Earthholder Poseidon
 fell in love, after Klotho⁶ pulled him
 from the pure cauldron,
 distinguished by his shoulder⁷ gleaming with ivory.
 Yes, wonders are many, but then too, I think, in men's talk
 stories are embellished beyond the true account
 and deceive by means of
 elaborate lies.

Ep. 1

25

28b

And so the immortals cast his son back
 once again among the short-lived race of men.
And towards the age of youthful bloom,
when downy hair began covering his darkened chin,
he took thought of the marriage that was open to all,

70

to winning famous Hippodamia from her father,
 the Pisan. He approached the gray sea alone at night
 and called upon the deep-thundering
 Lord of the Fine Trident, who appeared
 right by his feet.
 He said to him, "If the loving gifts of Kypris
count at all for gratitude, Poseidon,
come! Hold back the bronze spear of Oinomaos
and speed me in the swiftest of chariots
to Elis and bring me to victorious power,
 for having killed thirteen suitors
 he puts off the marriage

80

of his daughter. Great risk
 does not take hold of a cowardly man.
 But since men must die, why would anyone sit
 in darkness and coddle a nameless old age to no use,
 deprived of all noble deeds? No!
 the contest shall be mine

to undertake; you grant the success I desire."
 Thus he spoke, and wielded no unfulfilled words.
The god honored him
with the gift of a golden chariot and winged horses that never tire.
 (trans. W. Race)

86b

3) Euripides, *Phaethon* Fr. 781 (= lines 240-241?)

ὦ μάκαρ ὦ βασιλέως μείζων ἔτ' ὄλβον / ὅς θεῶι κηδεύσεις

Oh, blessed man, in your happiness greater than a king!
You will be a father-in-law to a goddess.

4) Euripides, *Phaethon* Fr. 774 (= lines 121-51?)

121 ὦν δ' υἱ | 123 ἐν σοὶ νί
ναῦν τοι μί' ἄγκυρ' οὐχ ὁμῶς σῶζειν φιλεῖ 124
ὡς τρεῖς ἀφέντι προστάτης θ' ἀπλοῦς πόλει 125
σφαλερός, ὑπῶν δὲ κάλλος οὐ κακὸν πέλει. 126

121 (of/from) whom... 123 (?it rests) with you...
Now one anchor does not usually keep a ship safe in the same way as
the man who lets down three—and a single leader for a city is unsafe,
while a second besides in support is no bad thing.

127 ἰσχύν νί	142 πεσωνί
128 γήμας	143 ἔχων δι
129 γάμοις	144 κλέθει
130 ἄλλος .	145 πολεμί
131 δώσει	146 κῆδος
132 νέος δ .	147 δεδοικί
133 ἥβης . .	148 ἔξεις δ' α
136 γέρων .	149 ὅταν τε
137 νέαι υ	150 καί ζῶν
138 τοσῶιδε	151 γαμείσι
139 δεινονί	

5) Euripides, *Phaethon* Fr. 784 N/775a K (= lines 160-2?)

ἐν τοῖσι μῶροις τοῦτ' ἐγὼ κρίνω βροτῶν,
ὅστις πατρῶια παισὶ μὴ φρονούσιν εὖ
ἢ καὶ πολίταις παραδίδωσ' ἐξουσίαν

I judge this among men's follies, if any hands over his patrimony to his sons, or
especially authority to citizens, when they are not in their right senses.

6) Euripides, *Phaethon* Fr. 779 (= lines 168-77?)

ἔλα δὲ μήτε Λιβυκὸν αἰθέρ' εἰσβαλῶν·
κρᾶσιν γὰρ ὑγρὰν οὐκ ἔχων, ἀψίδα σὴν
κάτω διήσει
ἴει δ' ἔφ' ἑπτὰ πλειάδων ἔχων δρόμον
τοσαῦτ' ἀκούσας παῖς ἔμαρψεν ἠΐας·
κρούσας δὲ πλευρὰ πτεροφόρων ὄχημάτων
μεθῆκεν, αἶ δ' ἑπταντ' ἐπ' αἰθέρος πτυχάς.
πατήρ δ' ὄπισθε νῶτα σειραίου βεβῶς
ἴππευε παῖδα νουθετῶν· ἐκεῖσ' ἔλα,
τῆδε στρέφ' ἄρμα, τῆδε.

"...and as you drive, neither enter the Libyan heaven, for as it has no moisture mixed in it, it will let your wheel fall down through it) (*a short gap in the text*)...but direct and hold your course for the seven Pleiads." So much the boy heard and seized the reins; he struck the winged team on their flanks and let them go, and the mares flew to the folds of heaven. Behind him rode his father mounted on Sirius' back, instructing the boy, "Drive over there! Turn the chariot this way, this way...!"

7) Homer, *Iliad* 23.431-33

ὡς ἔφατ', Ἀντίλοχος δ' ἔτι καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔλαυνε
κέντρῳ ἐπισπέρχων ὡς οὐκ αἴοντι εἰοικῶς.
ὅσσα δὲ δίσκου οὖρα κατωμαδίῳ πέλονται,
ὄν τ' αἰζηὸς ἀφῆκεν ἀνὴρ πειρώμενος ἧβης,
τόσσον ἐπιδραμέτην· αἶ δ' ἠρώησαν ὀπίσσω
'Ατρεΐδεω·

8) Euripides, *Phaethon* Fr. 773 (= lines 45-62?)

(Κλ.) μνησθεῖς ὁ μοί ποτ' εἶφ' ὅτ' ἠννάσθη θεός.
αἰτοῦ τί χρήσεις ἔν· πέρα γὰρ οὐ θέμις
λαβεῖν σε· κἂν μὲν τυγχάνης <ὅπερ θέλεις>
θεοῦ πέφυκας· εἰ δὲ μή, ψευδῆς ἐγώ.
Φα. πῶς οὖν πρόσειμι δῶμα θερμὸν Ἥλιου; 50
Κλ. κείνῳ μελήσει σῶμα μὴ βλάπτειν τὸ σόν.
Φα. εἴπερ πατήρ πέφυκεν, οὐ κακῶς λέγεις.
Κλ. σάφ' ἴσθι· πεύσθι δ' αὐτὸ τῶι χρόνῳ σαφῶς.
Φα. ἀρκεῖ· πέποιθα γὰρ σε μὴ ψευδῆ λέγειν.

...
ὅταν δ' ὕπνον γεραιὸς ἐκλιπῶν πατήρ
πύλας ἀμείψῃ καὶ λόγους γάμων πέρι
λέξῃ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, Ἥλιου μολῶν δόμους
τούς σοὺς ἐλέγξω, μήτερ, εἰ σαφεῖς λόγοι.

Clymene: Remind the god of what he once said to me when he lay with me, and request one thing you desire; more than that you may not rightly get. If you succeed in <your wish>, you are by nature the god's son: if you do not, I lie.

Phaethon: How shall I enter the fiery house of Helios?

Clymene: He will take care not to harm you bodily.

Phaethon: If he is indeed my father, what you say cannot be wrong.

Clymene: Be certain of it; you will learn it as certainty in time.

Phaethon: Enough, thank you: I believe you are telling no lie (*elision mine*)....when my old father abandons sleep and crosses through the doors for words with us about the marriage, I will go to Helios's house and test if you what you say, mother, is certain.

9) Euripides, *Hippolytos* 304-310

ἀλλ' ἴσθι μέντοι – πρὸς τὰδ' ἀθάδεστέρα
γίγνου θαλάσσης – εἰ θανῆι, προδοῦσα σοῦς
παῖδας, πατρώϊων μὴ μεθέξοντας δόμων,
μὰ τὴν ἄνασσαν ἰπτίαν Ἀμαζόνα,
ἢ σοῖς τέκνοισι δεσπότην ἐγείνατο,
νόθον φρονοῦντα γνήσι', οἴσθ' αὖτις νιν καλῶς,
Ἰππόλυτον .

But know this, and then be more stubborn than the sea: if you die, you will betray your children, who will not have a share of their father's house, no by the Amazon, mistress of horses, who gave birth to a master for your children, a bastard who thinks himself legitimate, you know him well, Hippolytos...

(trans. Halleran, with modifications)

11) Euripides, *Hippolytos* 1013-1021

ἀλλ' ὡς τυραννεῖν ἡδὺ τοῖσι σώφροσιν;
ἴηκιστα γ', εἰ μὴ τὰς φρένας διεφθορῆν
θνητῶν ὅσοισιν ἀνδάνει μοναρχία.
ἐγὼ δ' ἀγῶνας μὲν κρατεῖν Ἑλληνικοὺς
πρῶτος θέλωμ' ἄν, ἐν πόλει δὲ δεύτερος
σὺν τοῖς ἀρίστοις εὐτυχεῖν ἀεὶ φίλοις·
πράσσειν τε γὰρ πάρεστι, κίνδυνός τ' ἀπὼν
κρείσσω δίδωσι τῆς τυραννίδος χάριν.

Or will you say that tyranny is sweet? For those who are sensible, not at all, unless it has destroyed the mind of those mortals who like monarchy. But I would like to be the first at victories in the Hellenic games, but in the city second, prospering always with the best as friends. For this has political power, and the absence of risk gives a delight greater than tyranny.

(trans. Halleran, with modifications)

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