

Handout | Theognis, earwax and the end of the Lelantine War

1. Thucydides 1.15.3

μάλιστα δὲ ἐς τὸν πάλαι ποτὲ γενόμενον πόλεμον Χαλκιδέων καὶ Ἐρετριῶν καὶ τὸ ἄλλο Ἑλληνικὸν ἐς ζυμμαχίαν ἑκατέρων διέστη.

At the most, in the once-upon-a-time war between the Chalcidians and Eretrians, the rest of the Greeks also separated into alliances with one or the other party.

2. Strabo 10.3.6

Ἀρχέμαχος δ' ὁ Εὐβοεὺς φησι τοὺς Κουρήτας ἐν Χαλκίδι συνοικῆσαι, συνεχῶς δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ληλάντου πεδίου πολεμοῦντας, ἐπειδὴ οἱ πολέμοιοι τῆς κόμης ἐδράττοντο τῆς ἔμπροσθεν καὶ κατέσπων αὐτούς, ὀπισθεν κομῶντας γενέσθαι, τὰ δ' ἔμπροσθεν κείρεσθαι· διὸ καὶ Κουρήτας ἀπὸ τῆς κουρᾶς κληθῆναι·

Archemachus the Euboean says that the Curetes settled at Chalcis, but since they were continually at war for the Lelantine Plain and the enemy would catch them by the front hair and drag them down, they let their hair grow long behind but cut short the part in front, and because of this they were called “Curetes,” from the cut of their hair...

3. Zenobius 6.50

ἐπειδὴ Χαλκίδα τῆς Εὐβοίας πόλιν φασὶ ποτὲ ἀνθῆσαι δόρασί τε καὶ πλήθει τετρώρων ἀρμάτων. Οἱ δὲ φασὶν οὐ τὴν πόλιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἡρωίδα Χαλκίδα εἰρῆσθαι. Κόμβην γὰρ φασὶ, τὴν ἐπικληθεῖσαν Χαλκίδα, ἐπειδὴ ὄπλα χαλκᾶ ἐποίησατο, πρώτην συνοικήσασαν ἀνδρὶ ἑκατὸν παίδων γενέσθαι μητέρα, ὡς ἱστοροῦσιν οἱ τὰ Εὐβοϊκὰ συγγράψαντες καὶ Ἄριστος ὁ Σαλαμίνιος.

For they say that the Euboean city Chalcis once blossomed with spears and a multitude of four-horse chariots. But others say that it is not the city but the heroine Chalcis who is talked about. For they say that Combe, who was called Chalcis because she created bronze arms and armor, became the mother of a hundred children, after having been the first woman to live with a man, as record those who write about the Euboean affairs, and Aristus the Salaminian.

4. Archilochus fr. 3 West

οὔτοι πόλλ' ἐπὶ τόξα τανύσσεται, οὐδὲ θαμειαὶ
σφενδόναί, εὗτ' ἂν δὴ μῶλον Ἄρης συνάγηι
ἐν πεδίῳ· ξιφέων δὲ πολύστονον ἔσσεται ἔργον·
ταύτης γὰρ κείνοι δάμονές¹ εἰσι μάχης
δεσπότηι Εὐβοίης δουρικλυτοί.

Not many bows will be stretched, neither slings
plentiful, when Ares joins the throng
in the plain. It will be the grievous work of the swords.
For of this mode of fighting those ones (**keinoi**) are masters,
the lords of Euboea famed for their spears.

5. Strabo 10.1.12

Τὸ μὲν οὖν πλέον ὁμολόγουν ἀλλήλαις αἱ πόλεις αὗται, περὶ δὲ Ληλάντου διενεχθεῖσαι ... οὐδ' οὕτω τελέως ἐπαύσαντο ... ὥστ' ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ κατὰ αὐθάδειαν δρᾶν ἕκαστα, ἀλλὰ συνέθεντο ἐφ' οἷς συστήσονται τὸν ἀγῶνα. δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ Ἀμαρυνθίῳ στήλῃ τις φράζουσα μὴ χρῆσθαι τηλεβόλοις.

Now in general these cities were in accord with one another, and when differences arose concerning the Lelantine plain they did not so completely break off relations as to wage their wars in all respects according to the will of each, but they came to an agreement as to the conditions under which they were to conduct the fight. This fact, among others, is disclosed by a certain pillar in the Amarynthium, which forbids the use of the long-distance missiles.

¹ δάμονες is Fick's correction; manuscripts have δαήμενες and δαίμονες.

6. Theognis 885–94

Εἰρήνη καὶ πλοῦτος ἔχοι πόλιν, ὄφρα μετ' ἄλλων
κωμάζοιμι· κακοῦ δ' οὐκ ἔραμαι πολέμου.
Μηδὲ λίην κήρυκος ἀν' οὓς ἔχε μακρὰ βοῶντος·
οὐ γὰρ πατρώιας γῆς πέρι μαρνάμεθα.
ἀλλ' αἰσχρὸν παρεόντα καὶ ὠκυπόδων ἐπιβάντα
ἵππων μὴ πόλεμον δακρυόεντ' ἐσιδεῖν.
Οἱ μοι ἀναλκίης· ἀπὸ μὲν Κήρινθος ὄλωλεν,
Ληλάντου δ' ἀγαθὸν κείρεται οἰνόπεδον·
οἱ δ' ἀγαθοὶ φεύγουσι, πόλιν δὲ κακοὶ διέπουσιν.
ὥς δὴ Κυψελιδῶν Ζεὺς ὀλέσειε γένος.

May Peace and Wealth attend the city, so that with others
I may enjoy a revel. I do not lust after evil war.
And don't exceedingly give ear to the loud cry of the herald,
for we are not fighting for the land of our fathers.
But it would be shameful, being present, not to mount swift-footed
horses and look the dolorous war in the face.
Ah the impotence. Cerinthus is laid waste,
The good Lelantine vine plain is being shorn.
The good ones flee, the bad ones manage the city.
May Zeus destroy the race of the Cypselids!

7. Herodotus 5.75

μελλόντων δὲ συνάμειν τὰ στρατόπεδα εἰς μάχην, Κορίνθιοι μὲν πρῶτοι σφίσι αὐτοῖσι δόντες λόγον ὡς οὐ ποίειεν δίκαια μετεβάλλοντό τε καὶ ἀπαλλάσσοντο, μετὰ δὲ Δημάρητος ὁ Ἀρίστωνος, ἐὼν καὶ οὗτος βασιλεὺς Σπαρτητέων καὶ συνεξαγαγῶν τε τὴν στρατιὴν ἐκ Λακεδαίμονος καὶ οὐκ ἐὼν διάφορος ἐν τῷ πρόσθε χρόνῳ Κλεομένει. [...] τότε δὴ ἐν τῇ Ἐλευσίῃ ὄρωντες οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν συμμάχων τοὺς τε βασιλέας τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων οὐκ ὁμολογέοντας καὶ Κορινθίους ἐκλιπόντας τὴν τάξιν, οἶχοντο καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀπαλασσομένοι.

When the armies were about to join battle, the Corinthians, coming to the conclusion that they were acting wrongly, changed their minds and departed. Later Demaratus son of Ariston, the other king of Sparta, did likewise, despite the fact that he had come with Cleomenes from Lacedaemon in joint command of the army and had not till now been at variance with him. [...] So now at Eleusis, when the rest of the allies saw that the Lacedaemonian kings were not of one mind and that the Corinthians had left their host, they too went off.