

## Solon fragment 4

### Demosthenes *On the embassy* 254–256

λέγε δὴ μοι λαβῶν καὶ τὰ τοῦ Σόλωνος ἐλεγεία ταυτί, ἵν' ἴδῃθ' ὅτι καὶ Σόλων ἐμίσει τοὺς οἴους οὗτος ἀνθρώπους.

οὐ λέγειν εἴσω τὴν χειρ' ἔχοντ', Αἰσχίνη, δεῖ, οὐ, ἀλλὰ πρεσβεύειν εἴσω τὴν χειρ' ἔχοντα. σὺ δ' ἐκεῖ προτείνας καὶ ὑποσχῶν καὶ καταισχύνας τούτους ἐνθάδε σεμνολογεῖ, καὶ λογάρια δύστηνα μελετήσας καὶ φωνασκήσας οὐκ οἶει δίκην δώσειν τηλικούτων καὶ τοσοούτων ἀδικημάτων, κἂν πιλίδιον λαβῶν περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν περινοστήῃς καὶ ἐμοὶ λοιδορῇ; λέγε σύ.

ΕΛΕΓΕΙΑ.

ἡμετέρη δὲ πόλις κατὰ μὲν Διὸς οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται  
αἴσαν καὶ μακάρων θεῶν φρένας ἀθανάτων·  
τοίη γὰρ μεγάθυμος ἐπίσκοπος ὄβριμοπάτρη  
Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη χειρὰς ὑπερθεν ἔχει.  
αὐτοὶ δὲ φθείρειν μεγάλην πόλιν ἀφραδίῃσιν  
ἄστοι βούλονται, χρήμασι πειθόμενοι,  
δήμου θ' ἡγεμόνων ἄδικος νόος, οἷσιν ἐτοῖμον  
ὑβριος ἐκ μεγάλης ἄλγεα πολλὰ παθεῖν.  
οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται κατέχειν κόρον, οὐδὲ παρούσας  
εὐφροσύνας κοσμεῖν δαιτὸς ἐν ἡσυχίῃ.

...

πλουτοῦσιν δ' ἀδίκους ἔργμασι πειθόμενοι.

...

οὔθ' ἱερῶν κτεάνων οὔτε τι δημοσίων  
φειδόμενοι κλέπτουσιν ἐφ' ἀρπαγῇ ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος,  
οὐδὲ φυλάσσονται σεμνὰ θέμεθλα Δίκης,  
ἢ σιγῶσα σύννοιδε τὰ γιγνόμενα πρό τ' ἔοντα,  
τῷ δὲ χρόνῳ πάντως ἤλθ' ἀποτεισομένη.  
τοῦτ' ἤδη πάσῃ πόλει ἔρχεται ἔλκος ἄφυκτον,  
εἰς δὲ κακὴν ταχέως ἤλυθε δουλοσύνην,

ἢ στάσιν ἔμφυλον πόλεμόν θ' εὐδοντ' ἐπεγείρει,  
 ὃς πολλῶν ἐρατὴν ὤλεσεν ἡλικίην.  
 ἐκ γὰρ δυσμενέων ταχέως πολυήρατον ἄστν  
 τρύχεται ἐν συνόδοις τοῖς ἀδικοῦσι φίλαις.  
 ταῦτα μὲν ἐν δήμῳ στρέφεται κακά· τῶν δὲ πενιχρῶν  
 ἴκνοῦνται πολλοὶ γαῖαν ἐς ἀλλοδαπήν,  
 πραθέντες δεσμοῖσι τ' ἀεικελίοισι δεθέντες.

...

οὕτω δημόσιον κακὸν ἔρχεται οἴκαδ' ἐκάστῳ,  
 αὐλείοι δ' ἔτ' ἔχειν οὐκ ἐθέλουσι θύραι,  
 ὑψηλὸν δ' ὑπὲρ ἔρκος ὑπέρθορον, εὖρε δὲ πάντως,  
 εἰ καὶ τις φεύγων ἐν μυχῶ ἦ θαλάμου.  
 ταῦτα διδάξει θυμὸς Ἀθηναίους με κελεύει,  
 ὡς κακὰ πλεῖστα πόλει δυσνομίη παρέχει,  
 εὐνομίη δ' εὐκοσμα καὶ ἄρτια πάντ' ἀποφαίνει,  
 καὶ θαμὰ τοῖς ἀδίκοις ἀμφιτίθησι πέδας,  
 τραχέα λειαίνει, παύει κόρον, ὕβριν ἀμαυροῖ,  
 αὐαίνει δ' ἄτης ἄνθεα φυόμενα,  
 εὐθύνει δὲ δίκας σκολιάς, ὑπερήφανά τ' ἔργα  
 πραῦνει, παύει δ' ἔργα διχοστασίης,  
 παύει δ' ἀργαλέης ἔριδος χόλον· ἔστι δ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
 πάντα κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἄρτια καὶ πινυτά.

Solon

ἀκούετ', ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων οἷα Σόλων λέγει, καὶ περὶ τῶν  
 θεῶν, οὓς φησι τὴν πόλιν σῶζειν.

### **Demosthenes *On the embassy* 254–256, trans. Vince & Vince 1926**

Now, please, take and read these elegiac verses of Solon, to show the jury how Solon  
 detested people like the defendant.

What we require, Aeschines, is not oratory with enfolded hands, but diplomacy with  
 enfolded hands. But in Macedonia you held out your hands, turned them palm upwards, and

brought shame upon your countrymen, and then here at home you talk magniloquently; you practise and declaim some miserable fustian, and think to escape the due penalty of your heinous crimes, if you only don your little skull-cap, take your constitutional, and abuse me. Now read.

Solon's Elegiacs

Not by the doom of Zeus, who ruleth all,  
 Not by the curse of Heaven shall Athens fall.  
 Strong in her Sire, above the favored land  
 Pallas Athene lifts her guardian hand.  
 No; her own citizens with counsels vain  
 Shall work her ruin in their quest of gain;  
 Dishonest demagogues her folk misguide,  
 Foredoomed to suffer for their guilty pride.  
 Their reckless greed, insatiate of delight,  
 Knows not to taste the frugal feast aright;  
 Th' unbridled lust of gold, their only care,  
 Nor public wealth nor wealth divine will spare.  
 Now here, now there, they raven, rob and seize,  
 Heedless of Justice and her stern decrees,  
 Who silently the present and the past  
 Reviews, whose slow revenge o'ertakes at last.  
 On every home the swift contagion falls,  
 Till servitude a free-born race enthralls.  
 Now faction reigns now wakes the sword of strife,  
 And comely youth shall pay its toll of life;  
 We waste our strength in conflict with our kin,  
 And soon our gates shall let the foeman in.  
 Such woes the factious nation shall endure;  
 A fate more hard awaits the hapless poor;  
 For them, enslaved, bound with insulting chains,  
 Captivity in alien lands remains.

To every hearth the public curse extends;  
 The courtyard gate no longer safety lends;  
 Death leaps the wall, nor shall he shun the doom  
 Who flies for safety to his inmost room.  
 Ye men of Athens, listen while I show  
 How many ills from lawless licence flow.  
 Respect for Law shall check your rising lust,  
 Humble the haughty, fetter the unjust,  
 Make the rough places plain, bid envy cease,  
 Wither infatuation's fell increase,  
 Make crooked judgement straight, the works prevent  
 Of insolence and sullen discontent,  
 And quench the fires of strife. In Law we find  
 The wisdom and perfection of Mankind.

Solon

You have heard, men of Athens, what Solon says of men of such character, and of the gods who protect our city.

## Solon fragment 5

### Aristotle *Athenian Constitution* 11-12

ὁ δὲ Σόλων ἀμφοτέροις ἠναντιώθη, καὶ ἐξὸν αὐτῷ μεθ' ὁποτέρων ἐβούλετο συστά[ντ]α τυραννεῖν εἴλετο πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους ἀπεχθέσθαι, σώσας σώσας πατρίδα καὶ τὰ βέλ[λι]στα νομοθετήσας.

ταῦτα δ' ὅτι τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἔσχεν οἱ τ' ἄλλοι συμφωνοῦσι πάντες, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ ποιήσει μέμνηται περὶ αὐτῶν ἐν τοῖσδε·

δήμῳ μὲν γ]ρ ἔδωκα τόσον γέρας ὅσον ἀπαρκεῖ,  
 τιμῆς οὔτ' ἀφελῶν οὔτ' ἐπορεφάμενος·

οἱ δ' εἶχον δύναμιν καὶ χρήμασιν ἦσαν ἀγῆτοί,

καὶ τοῖς ἐφρασάμην μηδὲν ἀεικὲς ἔχειν.  
 ἔστην δ' ἀμφιβαλῶν κρατερὸν σάκος ἀμφοτέροισι,  
 νικᾶν δ' οὐκ εἶας οὐδετέρους ἀδίκως.

### **Aristotle *Athenian Constitution* 11–12, trans. Kenyon 1907**

He, however, had resisted both classes. He might have made himself a despot by attaching himself to whichever party he chose, but he preferred, though at the cost of incurring the enmity of both, to save the country and establish the best laws that were possible.

The truth of this view of Solon's policy is established alike by the common consent of all, and by the mention which he has himself made of the matter in his poems. Thus :—

I gave to the mass of the people such rank as befitted their need,  
 I took not away their honour, and I granted naught to their greed ;  
 While those who were rich in power, who in wealth were glorious and great,  
 I bethought me that naught should befall them unworthy their splendour and  
     state ;  
 So I stood with my shield outstretched, and both were safe in its sight,  
 And I would not that either should triumph, when the triumph was not with right.

## **Solon fragment 36**

### **Aristotle *Athenian Constitution* 12**

[πάλιν] δὲ καὶ περὶ τῆς ἀρ[οκ]οπῆς τῶν χ[ρε]ῶν καὶ τῶν δουλευόντων μὲν πρότερον ἐλυθερωθέντων δὲ διὰ τὴν σεισάχθειαν·

ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν μὲν οὐνεκα ξ[υ]νήγαγον  
 δῆμον, τί τούτων πρὶν τυχεῖν ἐπαυσάμην;

συμμαρτυροίη ταῦτ' ἄν ἐν δίκῃ χρόνου  
 μήτηρ μεγίστη δαιμόνων Ὀλυμπίων  
 ἄριστα, Γῆ μέλαινα, τῆς ἐγὼ ποτε  
 ὄρους ἀνεῖλον πολλαχῆ πεπηγότα[ς],  
 πρόσθεν δὲ δουλεύουσα, νῦν ἐλευθέρα.

πολλοὺς δ' Ἀθήνας. πατρίδ' εἶδ' θεόκτιτον,  
 ἀνήγαγον πραθέντας, ἄλλον ἐκδίκως,  
 ἄλλον δικαίως, τοὺς δ' ἀναγκαίης ὑπὸ  
 χρειοῦς φυγόντας, γλῶσσαν οὐκέτ' Ἀττικὴν  
 ἰέντας, ὡς ἂν πολλαχῆ πλανωμένους,

τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ' αὐτοῦ δουλίην ἀεικέα  
 ἔχοντας, ἦθη δεσποτῶν τρομευμέν[ους],  
 ἐλευθέρους ἔθηκα. ταῦτα μὲν κράτει  
 νόμου, βίαν τε καὶ δίκην συναρμόσας,  
 ἔρεξα, καὶ διῆλθον ὡς ὑπεσχ[ό] μιν.

θεσμούς θ' ὁμοίως τῷ κακῷ τε κάγαθῷ,  
 εὐθειᾶν εἰς ἕκαστον ἀρμόσας δίκην,  
 ἔγραψα. κέντρον δ' ἄλλος ὡς ἐγὼ λαβών,  
 [κ]ακοφραδῆς τε ἰαὶ φιλοκτῆμων ἀνήρ,  
 οὐκ ἂν κατέσχε δῆμον· εἰ γὰρ ἤθελον  
 ὃ τοῖς ἐναντίο[ισι]ν ἦνδανεν τότε,  
 αὐθις δ' ἂ τοῖσιν οὔτεροι φρασαίατο,

πολλῶν ἂν ἀνδρῶν ἦδ' ἐχηρώθη πόλις.  
 τῶν οὐνεκ ἀλκὴν πάντοθεν ποιούμενος  
 ὡς ἐν κυσὶν πολλαῖσιν ἐστράφην λύκος.

**Aristotle *Athenian Constitution* 12, trans. Kenyon 1907**

Once more he speaks of the abolition of debts and of those who before were in servitude, but were released owing to the Seisachtheia :—

Wherefore I freed the racked and tortured crowd  
 From all the evils that beset their lot,  
 Thou, when slow time brings justice in its train,  
 O mighty mother of the Olympian gods,

Dark Earth, thou best canst witness, from whose breast  
I swept the pillars broad-cast planted there.  
And made thee free, who hadst been slave of yore.  
And many a man whom fraud or law had sold  
Far from his god-built land, an outcast slave,  
I brought again to Athens; yea, and some,  
Exiles from home through debt's oppressive load,  
Speaking no more the dear Athenian tongue,  
But wandering far and wide, I brought again ;  
And those that here in vilest slavery  
Crouched 'neath a master's frown, I set them free.  
Thus might and right were yoked in harmony,  
Since by the force of law I won my ends  
And kept my promise. Equal laws I gave  
To evil and to good, with even hand  
Drawing straight justice for the lot of each.  
But had another held the goad as I,  
One in whose heart was guile and greediness,  
He had not kept the people back from strife.  
For had I granted, now what pleased the one,  
Then what their foes devised within their hearts,  
Of many a man this state had been bereft.  
Therefore I showed my might on every side,  
Turning at bay like wolf among the hounds.