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The "Lyric" Age of Greece:
"Counterbalanced against the iron is the sweet lyre-playing"

I. Homer:

. . .the crew went up to the great house of Alkínošs.
Here the enclosures, entrance ways, and rooms
were filled with men, young men and old, for whom
Alkínošs had put twelve sheep to sacrifice,
eight tuskers and a pair of shambling oxen.
These, now, they flayed and dressed to make their banquet.
The crier soon came, leading that man of song
whom the Muse cherished; by her gift he knew
the good of life, and evil -
for she who lent him sweetness made him blind.
Pontónošs fixed a studded chair for him
hard by a pillar amid the banqueters,
hanging the taut harp from a peg above him,
and guided up his hands upon the strings;
placed a bread basket at his side, and poured
wine in a cup, that he might drink his fill. (Odyssey 8.61-78)

III. Archilochus:

My shield's in the hands of some jubilant Thracian - a faultless
piece of equipment which I left, unwillingly, beside a bush.
Myself, I'm safe. What do I care about that shield?
to hell with it! I'll soon find another one that's no worse. (2)

IV. Paul Allen Miller:

If we are to assume that this poem represents a personal confession, as the traditional interpretation dictates, then we must also account for how such a revelation would have been received by the poet's peers. This aspect of the poem's public reception takes on particular importance when dealing with archaic poetry, since at this time there was no book trade and consequently no widespread circulation of manuscripts. A poet's works would have achieved currency and been preserved only if his auditors deemed them worthy of memorization and transmission. As such, Archilochus' verses could hardly have been viewed as antisocial but must have represented, in some sense, a shared communal code (20).

V. Homer again:

. . .-Well, Zeus himself inspired me;
I wrenched my dogskin helmet off my head,
Dropped my spear, dodged out of my long shield,
Ran for the king's chariot and swung on
to embrace and kiss his knees. He pulled me up,
took pity on me, placed me on the footboards,
And drove home with me crouching there in tears (Odyssey 14.317-23)

VI. Archilochus again:
 . . . driven off course by the waves;
and may the top-knotted Thracians most hospitably
 receive him, stripped to the skin,
in Salmydessos - there to endure miseries in full measure,
 eating the bread of slavery -
frozen stiff with cold, crusted with salt
 and covered thick with seaweed,
his teeth chattering like a dog's as he lies
 face-down in his helplessness
at the edge of the breaking waves . . .
 This is what I would like to see
happen to the man who wronged me and trod his oaths underfoot,
 that man who was once my friend. (9)

VII. Xenophanes:
Now the floor is clean, and so too are everyone's hands
 and cups. One person sets the plaited wreaths on people's heads,
while another passes around sweet-smelling myrrh in a dish;
 the mixing bowl stands full of merriment,
and other wine is ready, promising never to give out,
 a gentle vintage in the jars that is redolent of flowers.
In the midst of things frankincense sends forth its holy scent,
 and there is water, cold and sweet and pure.
Nearby lie golden loaves and an estimable table
 heavily burdened with cheese and rich honey;
the alter in the middle is covered with flowers all over,
 and song and festivity encompass the house.
The first duty of men who are merry is to hymn divinity
 with decorous stories and pure speeches,
once they have poured libations and prayed for the capacity
 to do what is right. . . (107)

VIII. Solon:
For to the people I gave as much privilege as sufficed them,
 neither taking away honor nor holding out still more.
As for those who had power and were admired for wealth,
 I took care that they too should have no unseemly share.
I stood holding my strong shield about both parties,
 Allowing neither to gain victory unjustly. . . (67)

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