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ANACHARSIS OR ABOUT NAKED EXERCISE

[1] *Why are your young men doing these things, Solon? Some of them, clinched together, are tripping each other up, while others are choking and twisting as they wallow in the mud, rolling around just like swine.¹ At first, immediately after undressing, they slathered themselves with *olive oil—for I was watching—and took turns very peacefully rubbing one another down. Then I don't know what got into them after that, they are pushing each other with their

* Words explained in the glossary are marked by an asterisk on their first occurrence in the translation.

συννενευκότες καὶ τὰ μέτωπα συναρά-
ττουσιν ὥσπερ οἱ κριοί.

καὶ ἦν ἰδοὺ ἀράμενος ἐκεινοσὶ τὸν ἕτερον
ἐκ τοῖν σκελοῖν ἀφῆκεν εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος, εἴτ’
ἐπικαταπεσὼν ἀνακύπτειν οὐκ ἔξ, συνωθῶν
κάτω εἰς τὸν πηλόν· τέλος δὲ ἤδη περιπλέξας
αὐτῷ τὰ σκέλη κατὰ τὴν γαστέρα τὸν πῆχυν
ὑποβαλὼν τῷ λαιμῷ ἄγχει ἄθλιον, ὁ δὲ
παρακροτεῖ εἰς τὸν ὦμον, ἰκετεύων οἶμαι, ὥς
μὴ τέλεον ἀποπνιγείη.

καὶ οὐδὲ τοῦ ἐλαίου ἔνεκα φείδονται μὴ
μολύνεσθαι, ἀλλ’ ἀφανίσαντες τὸ χρῖμα καὶ
τοῦ βορβόρου ἀναπλησθέντες ἐν ἰδρῶτι ἅμα
πολλῷ γέλῳτα ἐμοὶ γοῦν παρέχουσιν ὥσπερ
αἱ ἐγγέλους ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν διολισθαίνοντες.

ANACHARSIS

heads lowered and butting their foreheads together just like rams.

And look over there, that one is lifting the other one up by the legs and dropping him to the ground. Then, having fallen upon him, he won't let him get up, forcing him down into the mud. Finally now, having clinched him around the belly with his legs while putting his forearm under his neck, he is choking the poor guy, who is slapping his shoulder, surrendering, I think, so that he will not be completely strangled.²

Not even for the sake of the olive oil do they spare themselves from getting dirty, but they have ruined their anointment and covered themselves with mire and much *sweat. At the same time, they have provided me at least with much laughter, slithering through one another's hands just like eels.

[2] “Ἐτεροι δὲ ἐν τῷ αἰθρίῳ τῆς αὐλῆς τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δρῶσιν, οὐκ ἐν πηλῷ οὗτοί γε, ἀλλὰ ψάμμον ταύτην βαθεῖαν ὑποβαλόμενοι ἐν τῷ ὀρύγματι πάπτουσίν τε ἀλλήλους καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐκόντες ἐπαμῶνται τὴν κόνιν ἀλεκτρυνόνων δίκην, ὥς ἀφυκτότεροι εἶεν ἐν ταῖς συμπλοκαῖς, οἶμαι, τῆς ψάμμου τὸν ὄλισθον ἀφαιρούσης καὶ βεβαιότεραν ἐν ξηρῷ παρεχούσης τὴν ἀντίληψιν.

[3] Οἱ δὲ ὀρθοστάδην κεκονιμένοι καὶ αὐτοὶ παίουσιν ἀλλήλους προσπесόντες καὶ λακτίζουσιν. οὗτοσὶ γοῦν καὶ τοὺς ὀδόντας ἔοικεν ἀποπτύσειν ὁ κακοδαίμων, οὕτως αἵματος αὐτῷ καὶ ψάμμου ἀναπέπλησται τὸ στόμα, πύξ, ὥς ὀρᾷς, παταχθέντος εἰς τὴν γνάθον. ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ὁ ἄρχων οὗτοσὶ δίστησιν αὐτοὺς καὶ λύει τὴν μάχην—τεκμαίρομαι γὰρ τῇ πορφυρίδι τῶν ἀρχόντων τινὰ τοῦτον

ANACHARSIS

[2] Others in the open-air of the courtyard are doing the exact same thing, but at least those are not in mud. Rather, having put down deep sand in a pit, they are sprinkling it on each other. They purposely heap *dust upon themselves in the manner of roosters, so that they might be harder to escape from in clinches. The sand takes away the slipperiness, I think, and creates a dry surface for a firmer grip.

[3] And those over there standing upright, covered in dust as well, having lunged against each other, are hitting and kicking. Indeed, that one there looks like he will be spitting out his teeth, the poor guy. His mouth has been filled with blood and sand since, as you see, he was struck on the jaw with a fist. But not even that official is separating them and stopping the fight—I surmise from the purple that this is one of the

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

εἶναι—ὁ δὲ καὶ ἐποτρύνει καὶ τὸν πατάξαντα ἐπαινεῖ.

[4] Ἄλλοι δὲ ἀλλαχόθι πάντες ἐγκονοῦσι καὶ ἀναπηδῶσιν ὥσπερ θεόντες ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μένοντες καὶ εἰς τὸ ἄνω συναλλόμενοι λακτίζουσιν τὸν ἀέρα.

[5] Ταῦτα οὖν ἐθέλω εἰδέναι τίνος ἀγαθοῦ ἂν εἴη ποιεῖν· ὥς ἔμοιγε μανία μᾶλλον εἰκέναι δοκεῖ τὸ πρᾶγμα, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις ἂν ῥαδίως μεταπείσειέ με ὥς οὐ παραπαίουσιν οἱ ταῦτα δρῶντες.

ΣΟΛΩΝ

[6] Καὶ εἰκότως, ὦ Ἀνάχαρσι, τοιαῦτά σοι τὰ γιγνόμενα φαίνεται, ξένα γε ὄντα καὶ πάμπολυ τῶν Σκυθικῶν ἐθῶν ἀπάδοντα, καθάπερ καὶ ὑμῖν πολλὰ εἰκὸς εἶναι μαθήματα καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἡμῖν ἀλλόκοτα εἶναι δόξαντα ἂν, εἴ τις ἡμῶν ὥσπερ σὺ νῦν ἐπισταίῃ αὐτοῖς. πλὴν ἀλλὰ θάρρει, ὦγαθέ· οὐ

ANACHARSIS

men in charge—rather, he even urges and praises the one who has landed the blows.³

[4] In other places all the rest are hustling about and jumping up, as if running while staying in the same place and leaping up together kicking the air.

[5] I want to know what good it would be to do these things. To me at least, the activity seems more like madness,⁴ and there is no one who could easily convince me that those doing these things are not out of their minds.

Solon

[6] And it is plausible, Anacharsis, that the things taking place appear to you as such insofar as they are foreign and thoroughly out of tune with Scythian traditions—just like many of your doctrines and practices would probably seem strange to us Hellenes, if one of us, as you are now, were to

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

γὰρ μανία τὰ γιγνόμενά ἐστιν οὐδ' ἐφ' ὕβρει
οὔτοι παίουσιν ἀλλήλους καὶ κυλίουσιν ἐν τῷ
πηλῷ ἢ ἐπιπάττουσιν τὴν κόνιν, ἀλλ' ἔχει τινὰ
χρεῖαν οὐκ ἀτερπῇ τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ ἀκμὴν
οὐ μικρὰν ἐπάγει τοῖς σώμασιν· ἦν γοῦν
ἐνδιατρίψης, ὥσπερ οἶμαί σε ποιήσῃ, τῇ
Ἑλλάδι, οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν εἷς καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσῃ τῶν
πεπηλωμένων ἢ κεκονιμένων· οὕτω σοι τὸ
πρᾶγμα ἡδύ τε ἅμα καὶ λυσιτελὲς εἶναι δόξει.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

Ἄπαγε, ὦ Σόλων, ὑμῖν ταῦτα γένοιτο τὰ
ὠφέλιμα καὶ τερπνά, ἐμὲ δὲ εἴ τις ὑμῶν
τοιοῦτό τι διαθείη, εἴσεται ὥς οὐ μάτην
παρεζώσμεθα τὸν [7] ἀκινάκην. ἀτὰρ εἰπέ μοι,

ANACHARSIS

become acquainted with them. Nevertheless, take heart my good man; for the things taking place are not madness, nor is it for the sake of *violence that they are hitting each other and rolling around in the mud or sprinkling dust on one another. Rather the activity has a particular utility, which is not without enjoyment and brings their bodies to a not insignificant peak. Indeed, if you spend time in Greece, as I think you will, before long you yourself will be one of the muddy and dusty as well—the activity will seem that pleasurable and at the same time profitable to you.

Anacharsis

No thanks, Solon, these things might be beneficial and enjoyable for you people, but if one of you treats me like this, he will find out that we do not strap on the [7] dagger⁵

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

τί ὄνομα ἔθεσθε τοῖς γιγνομένοις, ἢ τί φῶμεν
ποιεῖν αὐτούς;

ΣΟΛΩΝ

Ὁ μὲν χῶρος αὐτός, ὃ Ἀνάχαρσι, γυμνάσιον
ὑφ' ἡμῶν ὀνομάζεται καὶ ἔστιν ἱερὸν
Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ Λυκείου. καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα δὲ
αὐτοῦ ὀρᾶς, τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ στήλῃ κεκλιμένον, τῇ
ἀριστερᾷ μὲν τὸ τόξον ἔχοντα, ἡ δεξιὰ δὲ ὑπὲρ
τῆς κεφαλῆς [8] ἀνακεκλασμένη ὥσπερ ἐκ
καμάτου μακροῦ ἀναπαυόμενον δείκνυσι τὸν
θεόν. τῶν γυμνασμάτων δὲ τούτων τὸ μὲν ἐν
τῷ πηλῷ ἐκεῖνο πάλῃ καλεῖται, οἱ δ' ἐν τῇ
κόνει παλαίουσι καὶ αὐτοί, τὸ δὲ παίειν
ἀλλήλους ὀρθοστάδην παγκρατιάξιν λέγομεν.
καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ἡμῖν ἐστι γυμνάσια τοιαῦτα πυγμῆς
καὶ δίσκου καὶ τοῦ ὑπεράλλεσθαι, ὧν ἀπάντων
ἀγῶνας προτίθεμεν, καὶ ὁ κρατήσας ἀριστος

ANACHARSIS

*pointlessly. Anyway, tell me, what name do you give to these things taking place, or what should we say they are doing?

Solon

The place itself, Anacharsis, is called by us **“gymnasium,”* and it is a sacred place dedicated to Apollo of the *Lyceum. You see the wondrous statue of him leaning against a stone pillar, holding a bow in his left hand while the right is bent back over his head, [8] portraying the god as if resting from a long *effort.⁶ As for the *exercises, that one in the mud is called **“wrestling,”* and the ones in the dust, they too are wrestling, and we call hitting each other while standing **“pankration.”* We also have other such exercises—*boxing and *discus and *jumping—for all of which we set up

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

εἶναι δοκεῖ τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν καὶ ἀναιρεῖται τὰ ἄθλα.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

[9] Τὰ δὲ ἄθλα τίνα ὑμῖν ταῦτά ἐστιν;

ΣΟΛΩΝ

Ὀλυμπίασι μὲν στέφανος ἐκ κοτίνου, Ἴσθμοῖ δὲ ἐκ πίτυος, ἐν Νεμέᾳ δὲ σελίνων πεπλεγμένος, Πυθοῖ δὲ μῆλα τῶν ἱερῶν τοῦ θεοῦ, παρ' ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς Παναθηναίοις τὸ ἔλαιον τὸ ἐκ τῆς μορίας. τί ἐγέλασας, ὦ Ἀνάχαρσι; ἢ διότι μικρά σοι εἶναι ταῦτα δοκεῖ;

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

Οὐκ, ἀλλὰ πάνσεμνα, ὦ Σόλων, κατέλεξας τὰ ἄθλα καὶ ἄξια τοῖς τε διαθεῖσιν αὐτὰ φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἐπὶ τῇ μεγαλοδωρεᾷ καὶ τοῖς

ANACHARSIS

*competitions, and the one who prevails is believed to be the *best among his peers and carries off the *prizes.

Anacharsis

[9] And what are your prizes?

Solon

At the Olympics, a crown woven from wild olive, at the Isthmian of pine, in the Nemean of wild celery;⁷ at the Pythian, apples from the god's sacred grounds,⁸ and for us at the Panathenaian, olive oil from the sacred grove.⁹ Why did you laugh, Anacharsis? Or is it because these seem insignificant to you?

Anacharsis

No, Solon, the prizes you have recounted are utterly majestic, and worthy not only for those distributing them to contend in honor

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

ἀγωνισταῖς αὐτοῖς ὑπερεσπουδακέναι περὶ
τὴν ἀναίρεσιν τῶν τηλικούτων, ὥστε μῆλων
ἔνεκα καὶ σελίνων τοσαῦτα προπονεῖν καὶ
κινδυνεύειν ἀγχομένους πρὸς ἀλλήλων καὶ
κατακλωμένους, ὥς οὐκ ἐνὸν ἀπραγμόνως
εὐπορῆσαι μῆλων ὅτῳ ἐπιθυμία ἢ σελίνῳ
ἔστεφανῶσθαι ἢ πίτυϊ μήτε πηλῷ κατα-
χρίόμενον τὸ πρόσωπον μήτε λακτιζόμενον
εἰς τὴν γαστέρα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνταγωνιστῶν.

ΣΟΛΩΝ

[10] Ἄλλ', ὦ ἄριστε, οὐκ εἰς ψιλὰ τὰ διδόμενα
ἡμεῖς ἀποβλέπομεν. ταῦτα μὲν γάρ ἐστι
σημεῖα τῆς νίκης καὶ γνωρίσματα οἵτινες οἱ
κρατήσαντες. ἡ δὲ παρακολουθοῦσα τούτοις
δόξα τοῦ παντὸς ἀξία τοῖς νενικηκόσιν, ὑπὲρ
ἧς καὶ λακτίζεσθαι καλῶς ἔχει τοῖς θηρωμένοις

ANACHARSIS

over their lavishness, but also for the competitors themselves to be so zealous about carrying off such important things that for the sake of apples and wild celery they undergo such hard exertions beforehand and run the risk of being choked and crushed by one another.¹⁰ As if it isn't possible for anyone with a desire for apples to get them without trouble, or to be crowned with celery or pine without their face being smeared with mud or being kicked in the stomach by their *antagonists.

Solon

[10] But we, best of men, do not pay attention to what is given *per se*. For these are merely symbols of *victory and tokens of recognition secured by the ones who have prevailed. It is the reputation that follows from these that is worth everything to the

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

τὴν εὐκλειαν ἐκ τῶν πόνων. οὐ γὰρ ἀπονητὶ
προσγένοιτο ἂν αὕτη, ἀλλὰ χρὴ τὸν
ὀρεγόμενον αὐτῆς πολλὰ τὰ δυσχερῆ
ἀνασχόμενον ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ τότε ἤδη τὸ λυσιτελές
καὶ ἡδὺ τέλος ἐκ τῶν καμάτων περιμένειν.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

Τοῦτο φήσ, ὦ Σόλων, τὸ τέλος ἡδὺ καὶ
λυσιτελές, ὅτι πάντες αὐτοὺς ὄψονται
ἐστεφανωμένους καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ ἐπαινέσονται
πολὺ πρότερον οἰκτείραντες ἐπὶ ταῖς πληγαῖς,
οἱ δὲ εὐδαιμονήσουσιν ἀντὶ τῶν πόνων μῆλα
καὶ σέλινα ἔχοντες.

ANACHARSIS

victorious. To those hunting glory from their *exertions, even being kicked is good on account of it. For it [glory][†] doesn't come without exertion, rather it is necessary for the one desiring it to bear many difficulties in the beginning and only then to expect the profitable and pleasurable end of their efforts.

Anacharsis

So you are telling me, Solon, that this end is pleasurable and profitable because everyone will see them [the athletes] crowned and will praise them for their victory—having pitied them much earlier for the blows—and that they will be *happy having apples and celery in exchange for their exertions.

[†] Bracketed words are not in the Greek text, but are added here for clarification.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

ΣΟΛΩΝ

Ἄπειρος εἶ, φημί, τῶν ἡμετέρων ἔτι· μετὰ
μικρὸν δὲ ἄλλα σοι δόξει περὶ αὐτῶν, ἐπειδὰν
εἰς τὰς πανηγύρεις ἀπιὼν ὁρᾷς τοσοῦτο
πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων συλλεγόμενον ἐπὶ τὴν
θέαν τῶν τοιούτων καὶ θέατρα μυρίανδρα
συμπληρούμενα καὶ τοὺς ἀγωνιστὰς
ἐπαινουμένους, τὸν δὲ καὶ νικήσαντα αὐτῶν
ισόθεον νομιζόμενον.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

[11] Αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὦ Σόλων, καὶ τὸ οἴκτιστόν
ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ἐπ' ὀλίγων ταῦτα πάσχουσιν, ἀλλὰ
ἐν τοσούτοις θεαταῖς καὶ μάρτυσι τῆς ὕβρεως,
οἱ δηλαδὴ εὐδαιμονίζουσιν αὐτοὺς αἵματι
ῥαινομένους ὁρῶντες ἢ ἀγχομένους ὑπὸ τῶν
ἀντιπάλων· ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ εὐδαιμονέστατα
πρόσεστι τῇ νίκῃ αὐτῶν.

ANACHARSIS

Solon

You are still unacquainted with our ways, I think. But after a little while these things will seem different to you, whenever you go to the festivals and see such a great crowd of people gathered together to view these sorts of things, and venues for 10,000 people completely filled, the competitors being praised, and the victor among them judged equal to a god.

Anacharsis

[11] But this is the very thing that is most pitiable, Solon, if they suffer these things not in the presence of a few, but among so many *spectators and witnesses of the violence. They no doubt consider them [the athletes] happy when they see them spattered with blood and choked by their adversaries; for these are the greatest blessings attached to

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

παρ' ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς Σκύθαις ἦν τις, ᾧ Σόλων, ἡ πατάξῃ τινὰ τῶν πολιτῶν ἢ ἀνατρέψῃ προσπεσὼν ἢ θοῖμάτια περιρρήξῃ, μεγάλας οἱ πρεσβῦται τὰς ζημίας ἐπάγουσι, κἂν ἐπ' ὀλίγων μαρτύρων τοῦτο πάθῃ τις, οὔτι γε ἐν τηλικούτοις θεάτροις, οἷα σὺ διηγῇ τὸ Ἴσθμοι καὶ τὸ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ.

οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν ἀγωνιστὰς οἰκτεῖρειν μοι ἔπεισιν ὧν πάσχουσιν, τῶν δὲ θεατῶν οὕς φῆς ἀπανταχόθεν τοὺς ἀρίστους παραγίγνεσθαι εἰς τὰς πανηγύρεις καὶ πάνυ θαυμάζω, εἰ τἀναγκαῖα παρέντεσ σχολάζουσιν ἐπὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκεῖνό πω δύναμαι κατανοῆσαι ὅ τι τὸ τερπνὸν αὐτοῖς, ὅρᾱν παιομένους τε καὶ διαπληκτιζομένους ἀνθρώπους καὶ πρὸς τὴν γῆν ἀραττομένους καὶ συντριβομένους ὑπ' ἀλλήλων.

ANACHARSIS

their victory. But among us Scythians, Solon, if anyone were to strike one of the citizens or, having attacked him, flip him over or tear off his cloak, the elders would impose large fines, even if someone suffers this before a few witnesses, much less in such great venues of the sort you describe on the Isthmus and in Olympia.

Entirely to the contrary, the things the competitors suffer lead me to pity them. And I very much wonder at the spectators attending the festivals, whom you say are the best people from all over, whether they are neglecting life's necessities by devoting themselves to such things. For I am not yet able to fully understand what enjoyment they get from seeing people hit and grabbed and then thrown to the ground and beaten to a pulp by each other.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

ΣΟΛΩΝ

[12] Εἰ καιρὸς ἦν, ὦ Ἀνάχαρσι, Ὀλυμπίων
ἢ Ἰσθμίων ἢ Παναθηναίων, αὐτὸ ἂν σε
τὸ γιγνόμενον ἐδίδαξεν ὥς οὐ μάτην
ἐσπουδάκαμεν ἐπὶ τούτοις. οὐ γὰρ οὕτω
λέγων ἂν τις προσβιβάσειέν σε τῇ ἡδονῇ τῶν
ἐκεῖ δρωμένων, ὥς εἰ καθεζόμενος αὐτὸς ἐν
μέσοις τοῖς θεαταῖς βλέποις ἀρετὰς ἀνδρῶν
καὶ κάλλη σωμάτων καὶ εὐεξίας θαυμαστὰς
καὶ ἐμπειρίας δεινὰς καὶ ἰσχὺν ἄμαχον καὶ
τόλμαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν καὶ γνώμας ἀηττήτους
καὶ σπουδὴν ἄλεκτον ὑπὲρ τῆς νίκης. εὖ γὰρ
δὴ οἶδα ὥς οὐκ ἂν ἐπαύσω ἐπαινῶν καὶ
ἐπιβοῶν καὶ ἐπικροτῶν.

ANACHARSIS

Solon

[12] If it were the appropriate time, Anacharsis, for the Olympic, Isthmian, or Panathenaian games, the events taking place there would teach you that we have not been pointlessly zealous about them. For not by merely talking this way could someone bring you close to experiencing the pleasure of what is done there—as if, taking a seat amidst the spectators yourself, you were to see the *excellences of men and the beauty of their bodies and their wonderful *fitness and their tremendous skills and unbeatable strength and daring and love of honor and unconquerable resolve and indescribable zeal for victory. At any rate, I know very well indeed that you would not stop praising and shouting and cheering.

ANAXAPΣΙΣ

ANAXAPΣΙΣ

[13] Νῆ Δί, ὦ Σόλων, καὶ ἐπιγελῶν γε προσέτι καὶ ἐπιχλευάζων· ἅπαντα γὰρ ὅποσα κατηριθμήσω ἐκεῖνα, τὰς ἀρετὰς καὶ τὰς εὐεξίας καὶ τὰ κάλλη καὶ τόλμαν, ὁρῶ οὐδενὸς μεγάλου ἔνεκα παραπολλυμένας ὑμῖν, οὔτε πατρίδος κινδυνευούσης οὔτε χώρας πορθουμένης οὔτε φίλων ἢ οἰκείων πρὸς ὕβριν ἀπαγομένων. ὥστε τοσοῦτῳ γελοιοτέροι ἀν εἶεν, ἄριστοι μὲν, ὡς φῆς, ὄντες, μάτην δὲ τοσαῦτα πάσχοντες καὶ ταλαιπωρούμενοι καὶ αἰσχύνοντες τὰ κάλλη καὶ τὰ μεγέθη τῇ ψάμμῳ καὶ τοῖς ὑπωπίοις, ὡς μήλου καὶ κοτίνου ἐγκρατεῖς γένοιντο νικήσαντες. ἡδὺ γάρ μοι αἰεὶ μεμνησθαι τῶν ἄθλων τοιούτων ὄντων. ἀτὰρ εἶπέ μοι, πάντες αὐτὰ λαμβάνουσιν οἱ ἀγωνισταί;

ANACHARSIS

Anacharsis

[13] Oh yes, by Zeus, and on top of that, Solon, laughing and jeering, because all the many things you enumerated—the excellences and the fitness and the beauties and the daring—I see them being wasted by you for the sake of nothing great. For neither is your fatherland in danger, nor are your lands being plundered, nor are your friends and family being violently abducted. Consequently, being the best as you say, they would be that much more ridiculous suffering so much pointlessly and undergoing hardship and disfiguring their beauty and physiques with sand and black eyes in order to become victors in possession of apples and wild olive. For it is pleasant to me to continually mention the prizes, they being of this sort. Anyway, tell me, do all the competitors receive them?

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

ΣΟΛΩΝ

Οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλὰ εἷς ἐξ ἀπάντων, ὁ κρατήσας αὐτῶν.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

Εἶτα, ὦ Σόλων, ἐπὶ τῷ ἀδήλῳ καὶ ἀμφιβόλῳ τῆς νίκης τοσοῦτοι πονοῦσι, καὶ ταῦτ' εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ μὲν νικῶν εἷς ἔσται πάντως, οἱ δὲ ἡττώμενοι πάμπολλοι, μάτην ἄθλιοι πληγάς, οἱ δὲ καὶ τραύματα λαμβάνοντες;

ΣΟΛΩΝ

[14] Ὑποκρίσεως, ὦ Ἀνάχαρσι, μηδέπω ἐννενοηκέναι πολιτείας ὀρθῆς περί μηδέν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐν ψόγῳ ἐτίθεσο. ἦν δέ σοι μελήσῃ ποτὲ εἰδέναι ὅπως ἂν τὰ κάλλιστα οἰκηθεῖν πόλιν καὶ ὅπως ἂν ἄριστοι γένοιτο οἱ πολῖται αὐτῆς, ἐπαινέσῃ

ANACHARSIS

Solon

Not at all, but out of all of them, one—the one who has prevailed over the others.

Anacharsis

And so, Solon, do they exert themselves to such an extent for the uncertainty and doubtfulness of victory,¹¹ knowing that in any case there will be one victor, but very many defeated—miserable¹² fellows pointlessly receiving blows, some even wounds?

Solon

[14] Anacharsis, it looks like you have not yet reflected on a correct form of government at all; otherwise you would not be reproaching the most *beautiful of traditions. If it should ever be your concern to learn how a city is most beautifully managed and

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

τότε καὶ τὰς ἀσκήσεις ταύτας καὶ τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ἣν φιλοτιμούμεθα περὶ αὐτάς, καὶ εἴσῃ ὅτι πολὺ τὸ χρήσιμον ἔχουσιν ἐγκατα-μεμιγμένον τοῖς πόνοις, εἰ καὶ νῦν μάτην σπουδάζεσθαι δοκοῦσιν.

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

Καὶ μὲν, ὦ Σόλων, κατ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἀπὸ τῆς Σκυθίας ἤκω παρ' ὑμᾶς τοσαύτην μὲν γῆν διοδεύσας, μέγαν δὲ τὸν Εὐξείνιον καὶ δυσχείμερον περαιωθεὶς, ἢ ὅπως νόμους τε τοὺς Ἑλλήνων ἐκμάθοιμι καὶ ἔθῃ <τὰ> παρ' ὑμῖν κατανοήσαιμι καὶ πολιτείαν τὴν ἀρίστην ἐκμελετήσαιμι. διὸ καὶ σὲ μάλιστα φίλον ἐξ ἀπάντων Ἀθηναίων καὶ ξένον προειλόμην κατὰ κλέος, ἐπεὶ περ ἤκουον νόμων τε

ANACHARSIS

how its citizens become best, you would then praise both this kind of *training and the *love of honor with which we contend over these things. You would also understand that there is much that is useful mixed in with their exertions, even if they now seem to be zealous pointlessly.

Anacharsis

To be sure, Solon, for no other reason have I have come to you people from Scythia—having traversed such a vast expanse of the world and crossing the great and stormy Black Sea—than to get to know the laws of the Hellenes and to thoroughly understand the traditions among you and to carefully study the best form of government. And for that reason, I deliberately chose you in particular out of all the Athenians to be my friend and host because of your renown—especially

ΑΝΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ

συγγραφέα τινὰ εἶναί σε καὶ ἐθῶν τῶν ἀρίστων εὐρετὴν καὶ ἐπιτηδευμάτων ὠφελίμων εἰσηγητὴν, καὶ ὅλως πολιτείας τινὸς συναρμοστήν. ὥστε οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις διδάσκων με καὶ μαθητὴν ποιούμενος· ὡς ἔγωγε ἡδέως ἂν ἄσιτός σοι καὶ ἄποτος παρακαθεζόμενος, εἰς ὅσον ἂν αὐτὸς διαρκοίης λέγων, κεχηνῶς ἐπακούοιμι περὶ πολιτείας τε καὶ νόμων διεξιόντος.

ΣΟΛΩΝ

[15] Τὰ μὲν πάντα οὐ ῥάδιον, ὦ ἑταῖρε, διελθεῖν ἐν βραχεῖ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μέρη ἐπιὼν εἶση ἕκαστα, οἷα μὲν περὶ θεῶν, οἷα δὲ περὶ γονέων ἢ περὶ γάμων ἢ τῶν ἄλλων δοκεῖ ἡμῖν. ἃ δὲ περὶ τῶν νέων γιγνώσκομεν καὶ ὅπως αὐτοῖς χρώμεθα, ἐπειδὰν πρῶτον ἄρξωνται συνιέναι τε τοῦ βελτίονος καὶ τῷ σώματι ἀνδρίζεσθαι