Hesiodic Paradigms of Leadership

1. WD 34-41:

σοι δ’ οὐκέτι δεύτερον ἔσται

οὐδ’ ἔρθειν, ἀλλ’ αὐθὶ διακρινόμεθα νείκος

ιθείη δίκης, οί τ’ ἐκ Δίως εἰσίν ἄρισται.

ἡδὴ μὲν γὰρ κλῆρον ἐδασσάμεθ’, ἀλλὰ τε πολλὰ

ἀρπάζουν ἐφόρεσι μέγα κυδάσεων βασιλῆς

dοροφάγοις, οἵ τήδει δίκην ἐθέλουσι δικᾶσαι,

νῆπιοι, οὐδὲ ἱσαίναν ὡσὶ πλέον ἡμισὺ παντὸς,

οὐδ’ ὅσον ἐν μαλάχῃ τε καὶ ἀσφοδέλῳ μέγ’ ὀνειρ.

But you will not have a second chance to act this way—no, let us decide our quarrel right here with straight judgments, which come from Zeus, the best ones. For already we had divided up our allotment, but you snatched much more besides and went carrying it off, greatly honoring the kings, those gift-eaters, who want to pass this judgment—fools, they do not know how much more the half is than the whole, nor how great the boon is in mallow and asphodel.

2. WD 220-24:

220 τῆς δὲ Δίκης ῥόδος ἐλκουμένης ἢ κ’ ἄνδρες ἄγωσιν

dοροφάγοι, σκολιῆς δὲ δίκης κρίνουσθε θεμίστας.

ἡ δ’ ἐπεται κλαίουσα πόλιν καὶ ἠθέτα λαῶν,

حة ἐσσάμενην, κακῶν ἀνθρώποις φέρουσα

οἱ τε μὴ εξελάσουσι καὶ οὐκ ιθείην ἔνειμν.

And there is a clamor when Justice is dragged wherever men, gift-eaters, may carry her off and pronounce verdicts with crooked judgments; and she follows, lamenting the city and the ways of the people, clad in mist, bringing evil to the humans who drive her out and do not deal straight.

3a. WD 248-55:

οἱ βασιλῆς, ὑμεῖς δὲ καταφράζεσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ

tήνδε δίκην ἔγγος γὰρ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἔνοτες

ἀθάνατοι φράζονται, ὅσοι σκολιήσι δίκησιν

ἀλλήλους τρίβουσι θεοί ὡσὶν οὐκ οἰδήντος.

τρίς γὰρ μυριά εἰσίν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πολυβοτείρη

ἀθάνατοι Ζηνὸς φυλάκες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,

οἴ δὲ φυλάσσουσιν τό δίκαν καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα,

255 ἥρα ἐσσάμενοι, πάντη φοιτῶντες ἐπ’ αἰαν.

As for you kings, too, ponder this justice yourselves. For among human beings there are immortals nearby, who take notice of all those who grind one another down with crooked judgments and have no care for the gods’ retribution. Thrice ten thousand are Zeus’ immortal guardians of mortal human beings upon the bounteous earth, and they watch over judgments and cruel deeds, clad in invisibility, walking everywhere upon the earth.

3b. WD 256-64:

ἡ δὲ τε παρθένος ἐστὶ Δίκη, Δίως ἑγγεγαυά, καὶ κρινθ’ ο’ ἀδιάθετοι θεοὶ δεῖσιν ἢ τὸν ὕμνουν

καὶ τ’ ὠρτὸν’ ἀν τὶς μν ἐκεῖσις ἀνθρώπον,

αὐτίκα πᾶρ Διὶ παρθενομενη Κρόνιοιν

260 γνωρίζεται ἀνθρώπων ἀδικίας νόιν, διὸς ἀποτείχῃ

dήμου ἀπαρχιας βασιλέων, οἱ λυγρὰ νοέσσος

ἐλη περικλίνωσι δίκας σκολιῶς ἐπνεύσουν.

ταῦτα φυλάσσουσι βασιλῆς θητείαν μύθους

dοροφάγοι, σκολιῶν δὲ δικέων ἔπὶ πάρχον λάθεσθε.

There is a maiden, Justice, born of Zeus, celebrated and revered by the gods who dwell on Olympus, and whenever someone harms her (sc.Dike) by crookedly scaring her, she (sc.Dike) sits down at once beside her father Zeus, Cronus’ son, and proclaims the unjust mind of human beings, so that he will take vengeance upon the people for the wickedness of their kings, who think baneful thoughts and bend judgments to one side by pronouncing them crookedly. Bear this in mind, kings, and straighten your discourses, you gift-eaters, and put crooked judgments quite out of your minds.

* I have used the Loeb translation by Most with some modifications.
4. WD 240-41:

240 πολλάκι και ξύμπασα πόλεις κακοῦ ἀνδρός ἀστήρα, ὅστις ἀληταῖναι καὶ ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάται.

Often even a whole city suffers because of an evil man who sins and devises wicked deeds.

5. WD 225-37:

225 οἱ δὲ δίκαις ζείνοισι καὶ ἐννόησι ζειδοῦσιν ἰδίαις καὶ μὴ τι παρεκβάινουσι δικαίοι, τοῦτον τῆθην πόλις, λαοὶ δ’ ἀνθίουσαν ἐν αὐτῆ’ Ἐιρήνη δ’ ἀνὰ γῆν κοινοτρόφος, οὐδὲ ποτ’ ἀστοῖς ἀργαλέων πόλεμον τεκμαίρεται εὐφόρα Ζεῦς.

230 οὐδὲ ποτ’ θυσία καὶ ἀνδρός λιμός ὑπηδείξατο οὐδ’ ἀτη, θαλής δὲ μημιλότα ἐρά νέιονται. τοῦτον χρείαν μὲν γαία πολίν βιον, οὐράς δὲ ὀρώς ἀκρὴ μὲν τε φέρει βαλάνους, μέση δὲ μελίσσας’ εἱρόποκοι δ’ ὀυς μαλλοῖς καταβεβίθασι’

235 τίκτουσιν δὲ γνακίκες ἑοκώτα τέκνα γονεῦσιν’ θάλλουσιν δ’ ἀγαθότι διαμπερές’ οὐδ’ ἐπὶ νηὸν νισσονται, καρπὸν δὲ φέρει ξείδορος ἄρουρα.

But those who give straight judgments to foreigners and fellow-citizens and do not turn aside from justice at all, their city blooms and the people in it flower. For them, Peace, the nurse of the young, is on the earth, and far-seeing Zeus never marks out painful war; nor does famine attend straight-judging men, nor calamity, but they share out in festivities the fruits of the labors they care for. For these the earth bears the means of life in abundance, and on the mountains the oak trees bears acorns on its surface, and bees in its center; their woolly sheep are weighed down by their fleeces; and their wives give birth to children who resemble their parents. They bloom with good things continuously. And they do not go onto ships, for the grain-giving field bears them crops.

6. WD 190-94:

190 οὐδὲ τὶς εὐόρκου χάρις ἔσεσται οὐδὲ δικαίοι

Nor will there be any grace for the man who keeps his oath, nor for the just man or the good one, but they will give more honor to the doer of evil and the outrage man. Justice will be in their hands, and reverence will not exist, but the bad man will harm the superior one, speaking with crooked discourses, and he will swear an oath upon them.

7. WD 202-12:

205 νῦν δ’ αἶνον βασιλείας ἔρως, φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοὶς.

And now I will tell a fable to kings who themselves too have understanding. This is how the hawk addressed the colorful-necked nightingale, carrying her high up among the clouds, grasping her with its claws, while she wept piteously, pierced by the curved claws; he said to her forcefully, “Silly bird, why are you crying out? One far superior to you is holding you. You are going wherever I shall carry you, even if you are a singer: I shall make you my dinner if I wish, or I shall let you go. Stupid he who would wish to contend against those stronger than he is: for he is deprived of the victory, and suffers pains in addition to his humiliations.” So spoke the swift-flying hawk, the long-winged bird.
8. Th. 80-92:

80 ἥ γάρ καὶ βασιλεύσειν ἀμ’ αἰδοίουσιν ὅπηδεῖ.

85 ὁπότε τιμήσεις Δίος κοῦρα ἀγάλλοι
gενόμενον τοὺς ἱδεῖς διαχρεόνυμαι βασιλέων,
tοῦ μὲν ἐπὶ γλώσσῃ γλυκερῃν χεισουσίν ἔζεσαι,
tοῦ δ’ ἔπει έκ στόμασι μείλιγα’ οἱ δὲ νῦ λαοὶ

85 πάντες ἐξ αὐτῶν ὅρδεσι διακρινόντα θέμποις

90 ἱθήσῃ δίκην: ὁ δ’ ἀσφαλέως ἀγορεύον

95 αἰγὰ τι καὶ μέγα νείκος ἐπισταμένος κατέπαινες;
tούνεκα γάρ βασιλῆς ἐξέφρονες, οὐνεκα λαοῖς

βλαττομένων ἀγορήνι μετάτροπα ἐγγα τελεῖς

ῥηθεὶς, μιαλακοί παραμορφάμενοι ἐπέσ εσίν

ἐρχόμενον δ’ ἄγωνα δεων ὡς ἤλακονται

αἰδοί μελετή, μετα δὲ πρέπει ἄγρομένουσι.

for she (sc. Calliope) attends upon venerated kings too. Whomever among Zeus-nourished kings the daughters of great Zeus honor and behold when he is born, they pour sweet dew upon his tongue, and his words flow soothingly from his mouth. All the populace look to him as he decides disputes with straight judgments; and speaking publicly without erring, he quickly ends even a great quarrel by his skill. For this is why kings are prudent, because when the populace is being harmed in the assembly they easily manage to turn the deeds around, effecting persuasion with mild words; and as he goes up to the gathering they seek his favor like a god with soothing reverence, and he is conspicuous among the assembled people.

(Very) Select Bibliography:


